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RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

31/8/88

गु० कां० विश्वविद्यालय
हरिद्वार

Ninian Smart

A SURVEY OF THE SCENE (FEBRUARY 1986)

Religious Studies is basically a new phenomenon in the United Kingdom. It dates essentially from the mid-1960s, though there were forerunners, for instance the work of such well-known comparatists as Max Mueller, Andrew Lang and James Frazer. The chief pattern in England was theology by which was meant, initially, Anglican theology, and then more broadly ecumenical theology. Even here, Roman Catholic theologians operated for the most part outside the system until the late 1960s. Divinity chairs in Oxbridge were not even open to Protestants other than Anglicans. By theology in Britain is meant Christian theology, generally speaking. This had implications, as we shall see, for the study of Judaism.

The older pattern remains dominant, and in fact rather more so, because the cuts in university finance decreed by the Conservative Government in recent years (from 1979 onwards) have borne more heavily on smaller departments. Small is no longer beautiful, and more recently established departments are, on the whole, smaller.

In Scotland, the pattern is different in that the Church of Scotland is established there. There are faculties of divinity in the Scottish universities which date back to the late middle ages—at Glasgow, Edinburgh, St Andrews and Aberdeen; these converted to Protestant, Presbyterian theology at the Reformation. At three of these universities there are also provisions for religious studies at the undergraduate level in Arts faculties (but the department in Aberdeen is currently being killed off). At Queen's University (Belfast, Northern Ireland) there is a faculty of theology serviced mainly by theological colleges, and responsible, like other such faculties, for the training of clergy. However, these days in Britain, quite a lot of women study theology, complicating the picture.

Some of the English civic (largely 19th and 20th century institutions) and new (dating from the 1960s) universities have departments of theology, as do the ancient institutions of Oxford and Cambridge. There are also faculties of theology at various places (Durham, an ecclesiastical foundation, but not very ancient), at London, at Manchester and at the University of Wales. Depart-

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ments of theology exist in Hull, Leeds, Nottingham, Birmingham, Exeter, Kent and Bristol, although they incorporate some teaching of non-Christian religions and the sociology of religion, especially at Leeds, Bristol and Kent. London offers a degree in religious studies alongside the Bachelor of Divinity Degree. In Manchester there is a department of the comparative study of religion within the faculty of theology. There is a theology department at St David's College, Lampeter, part of the University of Wales, which incorporates religious studies formerly done at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth.

As well as the London operation, there are departments of religious studies at Lancaster, Newcastle, Leicester (threatened with closure) and Stirling, Scotland's new university. A course offered at Newcastle was called Divinity, but changed its name to Religious Studies in the late 1960s. Lancaster was the one new university out of six in England to opt for a department of religious studies. Sussex had a program from the mid-1960s, but recently it has been suppressed.

There are people engaged in Asian studies and African studies who contribute to programs in religious studies, and in some sociology departments or centres there are flourishing projects on the sociology of religion (e.g. London, Oxford, and Durham). Also important are anthropology departments, which have concentrated mainly on the study of religion in the U.K.: consider the work of Mary Douglas, Victor Turner and Edmund Leach. However, the attention of this article is mainly directed towards the state of religious studies in the U.K.

A PERSONAL NOTE

I was involved in starting the Department of Religious Studies at Lancaster, which opened for teaching in October 1967. It is by far the largest such operation in the U.K. with 14 tenured and tenure-track posts, plus one or two short-term appointments. I am naturally likely to see things from a Lancastrian point of view. I am personally an Episcopalian, and, therefore, have no prejudices against Christianity as a tradition and faith, but I am extremely critical of the way theology has become institutionalized in the U.K. My animus does not spring from rationalistic hostility to religion. On the contrary, I am also very critical of this hostile attitude as sometimes it manifests itself in philosophy departments (where I have taught): this is the establishmentarianism of the left, so to speak. I am also worried by the ways in which it may seem good politics to favour theology, as a broader vision (namely Religious Studies) may seem opposed to virtue, motherhood and the Christian heritage. Actually, being an optimist, I think the study of Christianity is much more fruitful and appealing in the wider context of religious studies.

THE SOCIAL AMBIENCE

A factor in the way theology and religious studies have evolved in the U.K. is found in the Education Act of 1944. The Act was passed during wartime and made religious education mandatory unless parents explicitly withdrew their children. It also provided for a daily act of worship in schools. Though it did not spell this out, the Act implied that the religion taught should be Christianity. As Catholics tended to have their own schools, the Christianity was conceived as a kind of scriptural faith, of vaguely Protestant character. The new post-World-War-II departments in many civic universities were, therefore, training people, especially women, to become teachers in the school system. England was assumed to be a Christian country, partly because of Anglican establishmentarianism. The sense of being a Christian country was of course mistaken. There have long been many people alienated from the churches who are practical or theoretical atheists and agnostics. Further, there are some religious groups important in history (such as the Jews, or, more recently, through immigration in the 1950s and 1960s, Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, etc.), whose rights need to be protected and whose religious requirements need to be taken into account. In fact Britain is a pluralist society.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A significant number of educationalists have pluralized religious education, and made the teaching of world religions an integral part of Religious Education. They have sometimes also stressed a phenomenological approach which leaves students free to pursue issues without secret or overt evangelistic pressure (which in any case is counterproductive a lot of the time). This pluralistic Religious Education was promoted by Lancaster Projects on Religious Education in secondary and primary schools; and by the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education, founded in 1969 at Shap Wells in the North of England. Various excellent and influential theorists of Religious Education helped with this process, such as Brian Gates, Jean Holm, Jack Earl and Edwin Cox.

However, many teachers in the system still retain the assumption that religious education means inculcating Christianity of a sort, and Biblical Studies (in the Christian sense) is a powerful ingredient of religious education. One University has a department of that name (Sheffield).

These circumstances, then, need to be kept in mind when looking at English and, more broadly, British universities. It is on the university scene that I shall concentrate, although there are other parts of higher education, for example polytechnics some of which offer a course in Religious Studies (such as Sunderland Polytechnic), and seminaries, such as Jews' College, some of which grant degrees, etc.

THE PREHISTORY OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Neither the name nor the reality of religious studies existed in U.K. universities until the 1960s. Before that, there were a few chairs or departments of the history and philosophy of religion or of comparative religion. When I joined the British Association for the History of Religions in 1956, I calculated some 17 people in British universities teaching all religions other than Christianity. The most eminent amongst those were S. G. F. Brandon (Comparative Religion at Manchester), E. O. James (then just retired from London's Chair of the History and Philosophy of Religion), H. D. Lewis (James' successor) and R. C. Zaehner (Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford). James had at one time occupied a Chair of the History and Philosophy of Religion at Leeds, but this had been changed to Theology and was held then by the Barthian, J. K. S. Reid. Not only was this array a relatively small base on which to build the study of non-Christian religions, it also suffered from a weakness. In various places the person (or persons) teaching world religions was indeed expected not to concern himself with Christianity. He was often in effect a rather marginal figure on the edge of a theological faculty or department. (Somewhat as a person teaching philosophy of religion, as I have done in a number of departments of philosophy, may be the odd person out in a 'rationalist' *milieu.*) However, the prehistory of religious studies lay chiefly with the comparative religionists.

Comparative religion had a fine history, as recounted for instance by E. J. Sharpe in his excellent survey (*Comparative Religion—A History*). However this comparative study rarely embraced a rounded and multidisciplinary view of the study of religion; neither did its close relative 'history of religions', which often eschewed sociological and anthropological work for instance, and in the Chicago School tended to concentrate on myth, and did not bother much with doctrines, ethics, social institutions, or even religious experience.

MODERN DEVELOPMENTS

A programme in Religious Studies was started in Sussex under the guidance of Daniel Jenkins, who doubled as chaplain. This arrangement was, in my view, flawed from the start (though I admired Jenkins as a person and thinker). It has not survived, as we have seen. In 1966 Lancaster decided to start a Religious Studies department which began in October 1967. On 14 February 1968 I delivered an inaugural speech which outlined the nature of the modern study of religion as I saw it (I was then, and later, indebted to seminal thinking from such colleagues as Robert Morgan, Adrian Cunningham, James Richmond, Stuart Mews and Michael Pye): this lecture is reprinted in the collection of my papers *Concept and Empathy.*[1] In this inaugural speech I expounded the belief (a similar belief being held in the U.S.A., though I was not influenced by this, but depended on common sense and my opportunity, faced with a *tabula rasa*, for fresh thought) that: (i) religious studies is plural, i.e. deals with many traditions, and that no one tradition has priority beyond the fact that it may have been very influential in the culture out of which you are working; (ii) it is, like economics, aspectual, i.e. it abstracts an aspect of human life (religious institutions, experience, behaviour, etc.) and explores that across the board; (iii) it is multidisciplinary or polymethodic, i.e. it uses many disciplines and methods, sociology, anthropology, history, philology, conceptual analysis and so on; and (iv) is non-finite, i.e. there is no clear boundary to the concept of religion, and, in principle, it covers worldviews other than strictly or narrowly religious ones. These characteristics also imply some attention to questions not of how religion operates, but about its value or truth—i.e. questions of philosophy, and Christian and other kinds of theology (buddhology, etc.). I did not want to argue that reflective concerns should not be part of the academy, but I do still think that where studies are determined by *a priori* ideas of the truth rather than the description and theories of religion, much more is lost than if the case is the other way round. The Christian theologian can too easily ignore facts about alternative religions, past heresies, and the sociological determination of ideas, but it is difficult for the most determined descriptive religionist not to be challenged by students about the value of beliefs. However, in principle there is a divide between reflective evaluative studies and descriptive and theoretical ones. In many cases the distinction is quite clear, even if I am not fool enough not to see that there are some murky areas, hermeneutical problems and so on. It is important for people to know what they are trying to do and, if possible, not to confuse their goals. The problem now is that there are too many water-muddiers who would allow hidden agendas to dominate the academy. I like my motto: It doesn't matter really what you do as long as you know what it is that you are doing. This motto is almost true: there is a caveat, and that has to do with the morality of certain approaches to the study of religion.

RELIGIONS AND WORLDVIEWS

It seems to me to be wrong in a pluralist society to subsidize out of public moneys the exclusive or predominant teaching of Christian theology, especially when it unclearly represents itself as 'theology' *tout court*. If what is meant by theology, as some defenders of it aver, is a pluralistic reflection on matters of religious truth, then let us use the words 'religious reflection', or even more generally 'worldview reflection'. In fact these days, as indicated in my book *Worldviews*,[2] I prefer the phrase 'worldview analysis' for referring to the descriptive and theoretical part of the study of religion, provided it is understood that the term 'worldview' includes the incarnate aspect, i.e. the social institutions, rituals and so on by which a worldview is expressed. We could then speak of other activities such as 'worldview reflection' for reflecting on human values and so on; and 'worldview construction' for activities such as those of Karl Barth and Karl Marx. Anyway, to be more realistic about English language changes, we can still use 'religious reflection' rather than 'theology', which is misleading. In addition, a community is necessary in order to study Christian theology in a fullblooded way. However, the community of scholars is not that community; but the community of scholars would not wish to inhibit pluralistically incarnated religious reflection or even worldview construction.

THE SHAPE OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

There are those who would see religious studies as strictly descriptive and theoretical. This line was never taken when fashioning Religious Studies at Lancaster. A lot of attention was paid to the history of modern ideas, especially but not exclusively Western ones, and it is impossible not to be involved in philosophical questions, e.g. about methodology and about criticism. To my mind the most important evaluative question of all is how we are to arrive at trans-religious criteria or trans-worldview criteria for selecting between, or evaluating, religions or worldviews. Students come to our courses, as they do in politics and economics, with evaluative questions. It behoves' us to be pluralistic in the atmosphere of debate which is created, but the primary task is descriptive. Why? As the Native American proverb says: 'Never judge a person till you have walked a mile in his moccasins'. But more important, the facts of human life and history are crucial, and religion is too often left out as a potent factor in history.

We were fortunate to start at Lancaster in 1967, a time when students thirsted for both West and East, and were unconventional. A friend said to me when he learned I was going to Lancaster: 'You won't have any students, of course. Nobody wants to learn about religion these days'. How wrong he was. There were many students who did not just want theology. In particular they did not want the kind of theology which I had encountered when I first went to the H. G. Wood Chair in Birmingham's theology department (a Chair now frozen and possibly lost forever, it only had two incumbents, myself and John Hick: some of my orientalism rubbed off on him, I think): there 93% of students' time was taken up with texts, events and languages up to the mid-5th century A.D. (i.e. C.E.) and the remaining 7% with Reformation history or a study of the 39 Articles of the Church of England—this at a secular university. At Lancaster we managed to attain success, and this was one influence on other departments to take the Religious Studies side of things seriously. Because departments compete for applicants in the U.K., our example proved influential. Over 50 of Lancaster's graduates now teach in higher education worldwide.

A symbol for me was the creation of our Jewish Studies post funded by money from the government (I resisted trying to raise Jewish money for it for the main reason thet they should not have to pay for what was right on educational grounds). Though Jewish Studies in an ancient-text sense already existed at University College in London (and that department was later to assist King's in teaching Judaism as a living religion), ours was the first post devoted to Judaism as a living religion. What an indictment of the establishment! Some Jews I talked to did not see the point of teaching Judaism to all and sundry: that was an indictment of a non-educational outlook. Steven T. Katz was our first appointee and founded the programme. After him came an Anglican (just to show) and our present incumbent is the gifted younger Jewish scholar Paul Morris. But it seems to me that the set-up whereby one of our most important minority religions, and one crucial for European history, has been ignored is distressing. Now, two or three other universities teach vigorously in this field, and things are happier. It is, needless to say, no substitute teaching the Old Testament. As I like to say 'Two great books lie at the root of Western civilization. One is called the Old Testament; the other is the Hebrew Bible'.

A SURVEY OF SIGNIFICANT OFFERINGS

Some other programmes need mention. Glasgow's Arts Faculty's teaching of what was called the Principles of Religion, was started by A. Galloway, who had taught religious studies in Nigeria and was later to become Professor Primarius of the Divinity Faculty. He was succeeded by Eric Pyle, later to found the Queensland department, Australia's first. This department stresses phenomenological approaches, and though it consists of only two people it does a fine job. Then there is Stirling, now under the leadership of Glyn Richards, and a fine program in Edinburgh, under Frank Whaling. The department in Aberdeen specialized in African and missionary studies, but is now in demise, because of the financial cuts and the attitudes of the University administration. Similarly the small department of the phenomenology of religion in Leicester, a pioneer in the mid-1960s under Harold Turner and then Peter Mackenzie, seems destined for the axe. The Welsh language department of the history of religions in Wales has moved to Lampeter and continues its original work under Cyril Williams. Under John Hinnells, following Trevor Ling, retired, a renaissance of comparative religion is occurring in Manchester, but in difficult circumstances. In Leeds, Ursula King and colleagues carry on a viable Religious Studies programme. There are elements of Religious Studies elsewhere, notably at Newcastle. Meanwhile some teaching of comparative religion, and so some small degree of pluralism, is evident in Oxbridge. King's College, London, draws on powerful resources from various colleges, including the School of Oriental and African Studies, (itself, however, badly hit by Thatcherite cuts). With Lancaster, King's is the largest religious studies operation, and with Edinburgh's divinity faculty these are the largest places for the study of theological or religious subjects outside Oxbridge. In Cambridge, Julius Lipner teaches Asian religions, and in Oxford the post is held by Professor Matilal (whose interest actually lies more in technical philosophy), but Richard Gombrich, the Sanskrit Professor at Oxford, does a lot of good work in teaching Buddhism at all levels.

Meanwhile, the impinging of world religions occurs in various ways. There are the immigrants. There is the smallness of the global city. However, the provisions in the U.K. are not great and they are further curbed by the cost under the Conservative Government for foreign students to study in the U.K. I had about a dozen Sri Lankan doctoral students in the early 1970s, some of whom are now in influential positions in Sri Lankan education. We thought of changing the name of the University to Sri Lankaster. We had lots of Indians, Australians and Canadians. But those days are over: now we only have two or three Asian doctoral students. Moreover, though the department has expanded a little when others are faced with contraction, the scene is not too cheerful, because of the overall problems of the field in the U.K.

THEOLOGY AND OTHER PROGRAMS

Theology departments and faculties have suffered somewhat too, sometimes because of lack of student numbers. The department at Southampton was abolished while still dreaming, before the present wave of government cuts. There are still weightier numbers in theology, and establishmentarianism (politely made somewhat ecumenical) is still powerful. There are, however, some adjacent bright lights: for instance, sociology of religion, with such people as Bryan Wilson (Oxford), Jim Beckford (Durham), Eileen Barker and David Martin (London), is vigorous and humane. But overall the picture is not happy. One of the major problems is to do with image; and another is to do with working with the theological establishment.

The image problem is that many of the British public are used to Sunday school, and think that essentially this is what we do in religious studies at the tertiary level of education. Tertiary Sunday School: that is the image. People, too, are often quite unused to the idea of teaching about religions in a relatively dispassionate way. They think that teaching religion is really a matter of preaching. Of course, the public are right in a way: a lot of *theology* is tertiary Sunday school.

CONCLUSIONS

The theological establishment is therefore, a problem in that it is a kind of conceptual albatross round the neck of religious studies. It uses up, too, great resources, comparatively, in the reduplication of Biblical studies, while whole religious traditions can be wholly ignored—even within the field of Christiani-ties. There is, for instance, relatively little attention paid to the life of the Eastern Orthodox forms of Christianity, though the situation has improved in some places. The paradoxical situation exists that, in many ways, the teaching of Eastern or Southern religions may turn out to be more rounded in conception than is the teaching of Christianity and Judaism. The implicit seminarian background is here restrictive.

In the very long run, I am hopeful. The logic of the descriptive and theoretical approach to the study of religion, even from the point of view of those whose major aim is religious reflection, is the stronger. As the world gets more cosmopolitan, so the arguments for pluralism are less easy to resist.

Yet in Britain we do have a factor which clogs the wheels of change: that is the factor of religious establishment. Though it is polite, it retains reality. I believe that the logic of the wider study of religion points ultimately to the incompatibility of establishment with genuine pluralistic freedom. So we are involved not just in thinking about religious studies, but the shape of politics as well.

What is sad, however, is that at a time when Britain needs more knowledge and empathy concerning the world's worldviews, the descriptive study of religion and religions is so starved. The fault lies with various vices: academic conservatism, political narrowness, economic blinkers, ecclesiastical interests and public confusion.

NOTES

[1] Smart, N. (1968). *Concept and Empathy* (D. Wiebe, ed.). New York: University Press, and London: Macmillan.

[2] Smart, N. (1983). *Worldviews*. Scribners.

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POSTULATIONS FOR SAFEGUARDING PRECONCEPTIONS: THE CASE OF THE SCIENTIFIC RELIGIONIST

Don Wiebe

The study of religion in the academic/university setting has increasingly come under the influence of theology. It is argued here that retheologizing of the 'discipline' lacks any sound methodological warrants, but is grounded instead on a concern for safeguarding certain religious preconceptions (i.e. about Religion/religions). It is suggested, therefore, that retheologizing Religious Studies appears no less problematic in this context than does the retheologizing of biology which has provided us with 'scientific creationism'. Insofar as this essay argues that the philosophy of religion ought to be as much concerned with issues such as these as with the substantive beliefs/doctrines of religions, it contributes to the rejuvenation of that 'discipline'.

The study of religion in an academic/scientific setting is in need of close philosophical scrutiny. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the philosophy of religion has for the most part been seen as an activity continuous with the religious life itself. It has usually been understood, that is, as a rational explication of the import of religious experience; or perhaps, in a more critical vein, as an examination of the doctrinal/dogmatic contents (whether explicit or implicit) of religious traditions. Although I do not wish to argue that such activity is either unwarranted or of no value, it does seem to me that there are more pressing matters regarding religion for philosophy to attend to — namely, 'the study of religion' as a possible discipline, and the claims made on its behalf.[1] That kind of epistemological concern with its 'turn to the subject', so to speak, will, at least in some senses, bring the philosophy of religion into the modern period and give it a relevance it seems to have lost in our own time.[2] Given the claims that students of religion have made regarding the scientific character of that undertaking, one might have expected the philosophers of science — and in particular the philosophers of the social sciences — to turn their attention in that direction. But they have not. It is quite appropriate, if not imperative, therefore, that the philosopher of religion take up precisely that task. Indeed, that kind of philosophy of religion, I would

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venture to suggest, may have more to tell us about religion and the religions than can philosophy of religion traditionally understood. This essay, then, is intended as a first step in changing the focus of attention for the philosopher of religion and in that process to rejuvenate the philosophy of religion so as to make it once again an interesting and significant *philosophic* activity. I shall, therefore, concern myself here with the nature of the study of religion especially as it is undertaken in the North American university setting.

The title of this essay comes from Willard Van Orman Quine.[3] In his recent autobiography Quine recalls what he refers to as an 'eccentric assignment' in religion in his agreement to comment on a paper by Charles Hartshorne presented at a colloquium at Boston University in 1979. It was, according to Quine, an odd paper, filled with apparently meaningless or contradictory statements that forced him to question what he was doing there. Nevertheless, he does say that he did learn something, namely, why Hartshorne, and others, insist that sentences about the future are largely neither true nor false. Their claim, he found out, is made in order to reconcile God's omniscience with indeterminism. This, and the recognition of how heavily theology rests on the distinction between contingency and metaphysical necessity elicits from him the remark: 'such are the postulations for safeguarding preconceptions'.

Unlike Quine, I have worked all of my academic life in the field of 'Religious Studies' but have only recently, although now for reasons similar to Quine's, come to ask myself what I am doing there. There are, that is, contradictions to be found in the way the study of this set of phenomena is undertaken that I have not, until recently, clearly recognized. Students of religion wish to pursue their agenda in a religiously non-partisan fashion, but wish to do so without placing in jeopardy the truth-claims of Religion or even of particular religious traditions. Talk of a 'science of religion' as a special discipline is affirmed by many in this field, therefore, in order to reconcile the 'perceived' sacredness of religion(s) with the secularity of the ordinary (non-sacred) social-scientific study of human/cultural phenomena. That Religion is ultimately true, therefore, is known in some (*a priori*) sense or other. This claim is not, however, made directly, but rather flows from a particular reading of what the student of religion refers to as the principle of the *epoché*, a conventionalist stratagem that calls for the bracketing of the truth-question in the study of religion which replaces the contentious philosophical/metaphysical studies of religion of the past with their historical/empirical study that can far more easily achieve 'a convergence of opinion', so to speak, amongst the practitioners in the field. That reading produces, amongst others, the following postulates: 'the doctrine of the autonomy of religion' and 'the descriptivist doctrine' each involving the assumption of what it is hoped can be proved or shown to be so by the study of religion. The former is quite obviously circular for it argues that since the *discipline* of 'Religious Studies' exists it must have a peculiar subject-matter not amenable to other more ordinary social-scientific kinds of analyses. Religion is a *sui generis* phenomenon, so it is maintained, that can only be properly treated 'on its own terms'. To understand the 'religions' as a psychological or a sociological phenomenon, therefore, is simply not 'taking religion seriously'. The latter doctrine insists that the study of religion remain free of theory and forego any explanation of religious phenomena. To explain, it is argued, is to assume either that such phenomena are, in some sense or other, illusory or veridical and so to invoke the very category of truth that the principle of the *epoché* banished in its attempt to achieve a neutrality that could ground an academic study of religion. 'To explain' is taken to mean 'to explain away' and that, it appears, must be avoided at all costs. But to avoid that possibility altogether is to assume that it can never be 'explained away' which implies, I suggest, an ontological reality of religion that it may not really have.

These postulates, as I have already intimated, amount to an implicit but, I would argue, unconscious and unintended, theological agenda in the academic study of religion. The explicit intention of the early students of religion to see that study ensconced in the university setting required convincing the legitimating authorities that the 'new discipline' did not simply duplicate the work of theology. The apology for its place in the university, therefore, required what we might well refer to as the detheologizing of the study of Religion and religions. The recent 'discovery' (or perhaps better, 'rediscovery') of the *implicit* (but unconscious) theological agenda in the use made of the principle of the *epoché* by the first generation of religionists has given impetus, it appears, to a movement to retheologize the study of religion without hint, however, of any willingness 'to give up' the academic legitimation earlier granted on the assumption of the non-theological nature of that enterprise.

THE ACADEMIC NATURALIZATION OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

In a recent article reporting the results of a conference concerned with the question of the relationship of theology to 'Religious Studies', Professor Laurence J. O'Connell asks: 'Is it true that any attempt to re-establish an explicit role for theology within the boundaries of religious studies is fundamentally misguided and a repudiation of the scientific/academic aim of religious studies?'[4] Although claiming that the conference did not reach many theoretical conclusions, O'Connell leaves no doubt in the mind of the reader as to how the question ought to be answered. The practical solutions reached for the department of religion at St Louis — the venue of the conference — involve the adoption of a first-level course with a *predominantly* 'religious studies' identity which, however, allows for it to be complemented in the future by second-level courses 'which would be *more frankly* theological'.[5] Several essays based on the conference papers and published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* under the title 'Religious Studies/Theological Studies: The St Louis Project'[6] for the most part confirm O'Connell's assessment. For the majority of the participants at the conference there is a firm belief in an underlying congeniality between religious studies and theology and they look forward, it appears, to developing 'a closer working partnership' at a further conference for which funding has already been obtained.

What I shall do in the remainder of this essay is to sketch a quite different answer to O'Connell's question and attempt to show that the development of 'a closer working partnership' between religious studies and theology as sought by O'Connell and others will set the academic/scientific study of religion back 100 years or more.

The formulation of O'Connell's question is subtle and intriguing. There is no presumption it appears, that 'Religious Studies' has ever functioned without the assistance of theology, or ever intended to do so, but merely that theology's role has been somewhat submerged and out of view. Consequently O'Connell's response seems to concern only the question of bringing into explicit consciousness what is already implicit, and intentionally so, in the 'discipline'. On such a reading of the question a negative reply would be most reasonable. However, if religious studies is a 'discipline' wholly different from theology, only an affirmative reply will do. To show the latter to be the case would require showing that the crypto-theological character of religious studies in its early days is not essential to that enterprise, but rather the result of a misreading of the implications of the principle of the *epoché* and a serious misconstrual of the intentions of the 'founders' of that enterprise by contemporary students of religion.

I have shown elsewhere,[7] however, that the theological component which O'Connell finds to characterize the work of scholars in this field from its inception down to the present day is but the 'vestigial remains' of the evolutionary development of the so-called discipline of 'Religious Studies'. This is quite obvious in even the most cursory reading of the writings of the generation of scholars intent on establishing the scientific study of religious phenomena within the university setting. Their primary argument in seeking such legitimation was based on the radical distinction between theology (which was already ensconced in the university), and the new approach to understanding religion that they were proposing. To suggest that the crypto-theological agendas so often to be found in their work — as well as in the work of subsequent generations of scholars in the field — is something they were not aware of is both reasonable and true. But to argue further that had those scholars been aware of this they would have made it an explicitly constitutive element of their methodological framework for the new 'discipline' proposed is, I think, simply ludicrous. *Any* attempt to re-establish a methodological link of that kind between theology and religious studies today, therefore, would constitute a 'failure of nerve' in undertaking that study, i.e. a failure to follow out its original intention. I will not here recapitulate that argument which can be found in my above mentioned article on 'The Failure of Nerve in the Academic Study of Religion', but will rather illustrate that failure of nerve, as I see it, in the academic setting in North America and, more precisely, in the U.S.A. That, I suggest, can be seen most clearly in the increasingly significant and explicit role that theology is being given in the activities of the American Academy of Religion which is clearly evident if one takes as benchmark of the development of religious studies in the U.S.A., Claude Welch's assessment of the 'new discipline' presented in his presidential address to the Academy 15 years ago.[8]

Welch's address directed attention to the question of a possible identity crisis in the study of religion emerging from an incapacity of the 'new discipline' to distinguish itself from theology. (In this Welch seems to have accepted the assumption of the European founders referred to above.) According to Welch no such crisis exists for the student of religion in the North American academic setting where teaching has moved away from a religious/denominational orientation in the study of religious phenomena by rejecting the 'confessional principle' or, as he also called it, 'the insider theory of religion' as an appropriate methodological framework for its study. The battle for recognition of religion as an appropriate and desirable area for objective, scientific study within the university had been won. Rejecting the 'confessional principle' which, according to Welch, is constitutive of theology, as an approach to the data constitutes the creation of 'religious studies' as a new discipline *wholly distinct* from and *independent of* theology. Welch also maintained that the temptation to look upon the academic study of religion as a means of redemption — of the university or the world — had also, for the most part, been resisted.

In this light, it is obvious that Professor O'Connell's article shows a decided drift towards the 'confessional principle', although 'suitably de-nominationalized'. His piece, moreover, is but the tip of a very large iceberg, for there are, literally, scores of similar papers in the journals that serve scholars in this field.[9] More importantly, however, the American Academy of Religion itself seems increasingly to take on the religious hue to be found in so many of its members. The Academy, that is, seems to take up a 'confessional stance', even though it is what I have called elsewhere, 'a small c' confessional theology.[10] There was, it is true, a hint of movement in the direction of Welch's 'ideal' by the 'reflective religious activity', as it might be suitably referred to, that existed on the university campuses in North America. That much is recognizable at least from the time of Clyde Holbrook's presidential address to the Academy in 1964, entitled 'Why an Academy of Religion?' in which he dealt with the rationale for the 'emergence' of the Academy out of the substance of the National Association of Bible Instructors (NABI). This was certainly intended to move the study of religion away from, as he puts it, 'the partialities which at present afflict the field'.[11] The report of the 'NABI Self-Study Committee', however, seems to present an understanding of the role of the Academy that stands in opposition to any such development taking place.[12] It did take as one of its concerns the question of the independence of scholarship, but it also foresaw an Academy concerned with 'public professional obligations' and with 'the commitment of faith'.

As I see the developments in our departments of religious studies and in our various societies and associations for the study of religion on this continent, and in particular the American Academy of Religion (AAR), the more pervasive and significant concern has been with the commitment of faith and the professional obligations and *not* with the study of religion as an academic/scientific endeavour. This is quite evident, I think, in recent 'moves' not only to retheologize religious studies within the Academy, but also to politicize it. Let me for the sake of illustration of the general point draw brief attention to three recent presidential addresses to the Academy that indicate precisely that.

First, Professor Langdon Gilkey in 'The AAR and the Anxiety of Nonbeing: An Analysis of Our Present Cultural Situation'.[13] Gilkey deplores the positivist inspired split between reflection and belief which, he insists, can only lead to the non-being, i.e. death, of the AAR and of academic concern with religious phenomena. An analysis of our present cultural situation can only involve us, as he puts it, in 'seemingly inescapable, deeper questions than we expected, not only questions of fact and the scholarly interpretation of facts but reflective questions calling for new self-understanding and so for philosophical and theological creativity'.[14]

Second, Professor Gordon Kaufman in 'Nuclear Eschatology and the Study of Religion' complains of '. . . the artificial separation of theology from religious studies, which has come to define all too much of our work . . .', and he looks forward to our overcoming it.[15] He concludes: 'Theology and the study of religion must together move forward into one discipline which draws on the deepest religious resources and reflection in human life as it tries, in face of a thoroughly threatening future, to provide orientation, and guidance for our contemporary human existence'.[16] Religious studies must necessarily be a means of redemption or a hindrance to it (*contra* Welch) and so cannot, therefore, be an objective or neutral pursuit of the truth.

Finally, Professor Wilfred C. Smith, in his address on 'The Modern West in the History of Religions'[17] urges us to recognize that the very goals Welch thought we had already attained — and that Smith very much fears that we might yet attain — are eccentric, bizarre, abnormal, aberrant, etc., and that they cannot possibly constitute a framework for understanding religion. It is a wilful refusal to see the truth of the transcendent, and a dogmatic imposition of a naturalistic ceiling on the interpretation of religion and, indeed, of all human history. He concludes, and I think ominously so, that modern secularism is 'so important an error as to be socially and historically disruptive; not to say, disastrous. And as an intellectual error, [he continues], it is the task of intellectuals to correct it'.[18]

This sample of opinion of the 'leadership' of the AAR is slim, but very suggestive. The distance between these three and Welch is vast. The sample, in my view, therefore, is indicative of a decline in concern for the academic/scientific study of religion; a decline the root of which is to be found in the rejection of the assumption amongst students of religion that we could come to understand religion by means of a kind of study that is something other than itself a religious exercise. The academic study of religion, it is being argued, is exempted from the ordinary obligations of neutrality and objectivity that attend our other academic activities and yet, despite this, is to be accounted as if such exemptions had not been exercised.[19] (Special pleading, it seems, is deemed an acceptable form of argumentation in Religious Studies.) Having achieved the desired political goal, namely establishment as a *bone fide* university department, Religious Studies now refuses to live up to the commitment that it freely gave, or, at the very least, that it implicitly acceded to.[20]

It is here that I hope to see the philosopher of religion play an important role. The philosopher's task is at least two-fold: the critical function of exposing the crypto-theological agendas that seem perpetually to infiltrate the academic/scientific study of religion and religions and the constructive function of providing a methodological framework (or of refining/fine-tuning the existing methodological framework) so as to ensure the success of the intention of the 'founding fathers' — to 'naturalize', so to speak, this field of research. The late Professor William Clebsch quite rightly insisted that as a part of the curriculum of the modern university, Religious Studies has become a 'naturalized citizen' and like any other citizen of that community s/he must live up to the obligations to which s/he has sworn allegiance.[21] Not to do so, I would argue, undermines the credibility of their work as a scientific activity worthy of academic legitimation. Special pleading here can only lead to the infection of Religious Studies by religion itself and thereby place in question the objectivity of the results of the research undertaken. Indeed, I would argue that the tack taken by O'Connell and company can only make of that study an enterprise indistinguishable in structure and intent from the scientific-creationist study of biology and therefore bring into serious question its status in the university. The development of evolutionary biology, as is well known, is the result of the detheologizing of the study of biology. Its retheologizing has given us scientific-creationism, a 'new discipline' according to its practitioners, that deserves acceptance/legitimation by the academic/scientific community. It has, and I think rightly so, failed to receive it.[22] It appears, however, that the retheologizing of the study of religion, whatever one may call it, has achieved a place for itself in the university curriculum even though, methodologically speaking, its credibility does *not* exceed that of scientific-creationism. And that, I suggest, makes it an important matter for investigation by philosophers as well as other concerned academics.

NOTES

1 Although I refer to the 'discipline' of 'Religious Studies' in this essay I do so only because of the commonness of the locution. I have argued elsewhere that Religious Studies is not a discipline but rather a field of studies; see my, Is a Science of Religion Possible?, *Studies in Religion* **7** (1978).

2 The philosophy of religion is not held in high esteem. It receives little attention either in departments of philosophy or departments of Religious Studies. The former seldom hire philosophers with expertise in this area of concern and the latter see it as outside the boundaries of their 'discipline'. In part the intention of this essay is to show the relevance and importance that this sub-discipline can and ought to have.

3 Willard Van Orman Quine, *The Time of My Life*, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1985.

4 Laurence J. O'Connell, Religious Studies, Theology and the Undergraduate Curriculum, *The Council on the Study of Religion Bulletin* **15** (1984) 143, 144, 146. All references to this article are from p. 146.

5 Ibid., emphasis is mine. It is obvious, or so it would appear, that even the apparently 'predominantly religious studies' identity of the first-year courses would also be, at bottom, essentially theological.

6 See, W. H. Capps, Religious Studies/Theological Studies: The St Louis Project; L. J. O'Connell, Religious Studies, Theology and the Humanities Curriculum; J. Neusner, Why Religious Studies in America? Why Now?; P. J. Cahill, Theological Studies, Where Are You? W. F. May, Why Theology and Religious Studies Need Each Other. All these articles are to be found in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* **52** (1984) 727–757. The Essay by Neusner seems 'out of step' with the otherwise common call for retheologizing of religious studies in our universities.

7 See my, The Failure of Nerve in the Academic Study of Religion, *Studies in Religion* **13** (1984).

8 C. Welch, Identity Crisis in the Study of Religion? A First Report From the ACLS Study, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* **39** (1971).

9 A good number of these papers are discussed in my above mentioned article, see note 7.

10 In the article on the failure of nerve in the academic/scientific study of religion referred to above, I draw a distinction between 'capital C' and 'small c' theology. Crudely put, the former corresponds to denominationally oriented theology (historically specific) while the latter suggests the possibility of a transdenominational, or even transcultural, theology (i.e. a kind of 'perennial theology').

11 C. A. Holbrook, Why an Academy of Religion?, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* **32** (1964) espec. 100.

12 That report is also to be found in the volume containing Holbrook's above-mentioned AAR presidential address.

13 L. Gilkey, The AAR and the Anxiety of Nonbeing: An Analysis of Our Present Cultural Situation, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* **48** (1980).

14 Ibid., p. 17. This, by the way, is something Van A. Harvey, 10 years earlier, predicted would happen — namely, the development of a *theology* in the context of graduate departments of religion — although he thought they would be non-Christian, more strictly philosophical, and *not* servants of the Church or Tradition. See his, Reflections on the Teaching of Religion in America, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* **38** (1970).

15 G. Kaufman, Nuclear Eschatology and the Study of Religion, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* **51** (1983) 13.

16 Ibid.

17 W. C. Smith, The Modern West in the History of Religions, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* **52** (1984).

18 Ibid., p. 18.

19 I do not mean here simply to ignore the critiques of 'objectivity' by Polanyi, Kuhn Feyerabend, *et al.* I am well aware that any simply espousal of 'objectivity' can become an unacceptable 'objectivism'. Nevertheless, it does seem to me that a kind of 'intersubjectivity' characterizes the claims we make/espouse in the 'sciences' and it ought also to characterize claims made by the academic/scientific student of religion about religion(s). We may never be able to construct a wholly value-free/bias-free study of any subject matter, but that fact does not constitute grounds for espousing any and every value-framework as equally acceptable for doing our sciences. As someone has put it, that a completely aseptic condition can never be obtained in the operating room is no reason for surgery to be done in the sewer.

20 See here the thesis of the above-mentioned 'Failure of Nerve in the Academic Study of Religion' (note 7) and the preface and introduction to my *Religion and Truth: Toward an Alternative Paradigm for the Study of Religion*, Mouton, 1981.

21 W. Clebsch, 'Religious Studies Now: Not Why Not? But Why Not Not?', *Religious Education* (1975). See also his AAR presidential address, somewhat of an anomaly amongst such addresses as should by now be apparent, 'Apples, Oranges, and Manna: Comparative Religion Revisited'. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* **49** (1981). I think Clebsch is referring here to the political reality concerning religious studies and its place in the university and not describing the style of study undertaken by today's student of religion.

22 See here my, Failure of Nerve . . . (note 7), as well as my, A Positive Episteme for the Study of Religion, *Scottish Journal for Religious Studies* **6** (1985).

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THE THEOLOGICAL ENEMIES OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

THEOLOGY AND SECULARISM IN THE TRIVIALIZATION AND PERSONALIZATION OF RELIGION IN THE WEST

Jacob Neusner

The academic study of religion faces enemies on two fronts: secular and theological. The two come together on a single proposition. It is that religion is personal and private, not social, not an issue of culture, politics, public interest. What people do when they study religion, therefore, is to analyze an interior world, a world with little bearing on the realities of public discourse. Accordingly, no reason tells us why we should study religion, because, as a private and personal matter, there is something to be reported and recorded, but not studied. The study of religion, within this theology, does not involve knowledge of the world, but only of the individual at the most unique and unrepresentative. Religion, the totality of private messages, does not make itself available for study and analysis, for communication in public discourse. Within the theological theory of the matter, there is slight basis for academic study, for there is nothing to know, only something to report for the appreciation and edification of others. The accumulated messages of God's communication to individuals, one by one and in an intensely personal way, of course impress the secular enemies of religious studies as nonsense. The world presents more important subjects for study than nonsense. So, for its own reasons, the secular side concurs that religion is intensely personal. Religion is something not public, therefore not a matter of knowledge. Theological and secular enemies of religious studies therefore trivialize religion. That is how theological and secular enemies of religious studies treat religion as something essentially beyond all social analysis, irrelevant to the formation of culture and the study of society. The consequences of that view for the academic study of religion are spelled out.

INTRODUCTION

For nearly 400 years, from the Lutheran Reformation, and especially in the 200 years since the Enlightenment, two powerful forces have worked to transform religion from the paramount force in public life (culture and politics) into something else. Religion found itself transformed into some-

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thing private, therefore beyond rational discourse, and personal, therefore trivial and apolitical. Religion is a matter of belief and opinion, not knowledge. The secularists wished to force religion off the public stage, the theologians to keep it vivid in the heart of the individual. Together they worked to represent religion as private (Protestant) and trivial (secular), a matter of deep conscience (Protestant) or personal caprice and beyond rational and critical inquiry (secular).

Hardly a conspiracy, Protestant theology in some traditions and militant secularism have formed a phalanx to drive religion off the stage of public cultural life and back into the corners of the private life. Not a matter of public responsibility and shared discourse, religion for the secularist faded from consciousness. And the Protestants proved complicit. For if, as Protestant theology in the Lutheran tradition maintained, true religion takes place in the heart, in the act of faith by which alone we are saved, then religion does not form a component of culture, but a constituent of conscience. For their own reasons, secularists, from the Enlightenment onwards, have represented religion as something beyond all reasoned discourse: private, as the Protestants held, but therefore trivial, a matter of caprice.

In politics, the principle that the prince dictates the faith of the principality, *cuius regio eius religio*, hardly changed the picture. For if the prince decided the religion of the state, then the claim of religion to tell God's will hardly made much difference. God wanted, in that state, what the prince wanted. The upshot? Once more, intensely personal, therefore a matter of deep conscience to the individual, religion found itself forced from the public stage because it was private, a matter of caprice, and, in the end, trivial. God speaks, so it turned out, in so many individual voices that for the community we hear only a cacophony, not a social message at all.

When religion is studied in universities today, the same forces conspire to dictate what we study and when we study religion, and therefore how the coming generations will perceive and evaluate the claims of religion. What students today implicitly learn about the definition of religion, how it works, what about it matters, for the better part of the 21st century will dictate, in their minds, what self-evidently makes a difference in the world: not religion.

The reason we must care is simple. What students learn about religion—that it is self-evidently a matter of theological conviction, which is personal, so a dimension of conscience and character (the Protestant vision) or trivial, private, beyond rational discourse, unimportant (the secular vision)—is simply wrong. Students learn about religion exactly the opposite of the truth. That truth reaches us every morning in the headlines. Because of religion, nations make war or peace. Because of religion, people give their lives. Because of religion, economic decisions favor one course of action and not some other. Because of religion, culture, social organization form a single cogent system in country after country. Wherever we turn, from Europe to the Middle East to India, to the South Pacific, to the outer reaches of the Soviet Empire itself, religion turns out to form the single force that defines reality for humankind. It is not private, not personal, not trivial, but public, political, and determinative. Most of the world is what it is today because of religion, alas.

So when we turn to the academic study of religion, we ask that that program of study represent religion as it is, and not as theologians, for their reasons, and secularists, for theirs, want religion to be represented. By that criterion, the academic study of religion faces enemies on two fronts, one secular, the other theological. The two come together on a single proposition. It is that religion speaks to the heart in particular, it is personal and private, not social, not an issue of culture, politics, public interest. What people do when they study religion, therefore, is analyze an interior world—a world with little bearing on the realities of public discourse: what we should do about nuclear weapons or how we should organize society.

Accordingly, no reason tells us why we should study religion, because, as a private and personal matter, there is something to be reported and recorded, but not studied. The study of religion, within this theory, does not involve knowledge of the world, or even of the self as representative of other selves, but only of the individual at the most unique and unrepresentative. If God speaks to me in particular, then the message by definition is mine—not yours, not someone else's. Religion, the totality of these private messages (within the present theory) therefore does not make itself available for study and analysis, for communication in public discourse, and that too is by definition. So as I said, within the theological theory of the matter, there is slight basis for academic study, for there is nothing to know, only something to report for the appreciation and edification of others: 'Thus saith the Lord'—to me in particular. The mighty accumulation of such messages may impress, but hardly informs in the way in which, in the academy, we receive and analyze information and produce what we hope may become knowledge.

The accumulated messages of God's communication to individuals, one by one and in intensely personal way, of course impress the secularists as nonsense. True, they may concede, nonsense is nonsense, but the history, sociology, anthropology, even politics and economics of nonsense is scholarship. But why bother, when the world presents more important subjects for study than nonsense. So, for its own reasons, the secular side concurs that religion is intensely personal, private, individual: voice calling, deep speaking unto deep, divine mystery—whatever it is, it is something not public, therefore not a matter of knowledge. The secular enemies of religious studies—dominant at such places as Cornell, UCLA, Harvard and University of California at Berkeley, in which there are no departments of religious studies at all—propose to trivialize religion. It is something for religious people to do on the fringes of the campus—in the Divinity School, at Harvard, or in the Graduate Theological Union, at Berkeley. If those people want to believe, let them believe; we can tolerate anything, so long as they find no place at the center of the campus. But we do not have ourselves to confront religion as a powerful force in the definition of politics and culture. Why not? Because religion plays no public role. It is a matter of what people happen to believe or do in private, a matter mainly of the heart. So the secularists work out their deep convictions within the curriculum, dismissing religion as private and personal, a matter of mere belief—and so, utterly trivial.

Now in point of fact, the trivialization of religion, the dismissal of religion as something essentially beyond all social analysis, irrelevant to the formation of culture and the study of society—that view dismisses religion out of hand. It furthermore wishes religion away. Allowing the study of religion no place in the curriculum carries forward the secular bias of some universities and some academicians, bringing to its logical conclusion the sustained attack on all religion characteristic of education in this country for several generations. The principal dogma, then, of the secular enemies of the study of religion is that when you study religion, you are studying someone's fantasy, not something that matters out here, in the real world. The *philosophes* of the Enlightenment would have found delight in the contemporary pretense that religion does not matter. That is their view too.

But the facts point to religion as the center of the curriculum, if we want to teach our students about the world as it really is. The crises of the day derive from deeply held religious convictions. That simple fact proves that religion is not trivial, private, individual, or a matter of the heart. Religion is public, political, social, economic. It moves people to give their lives. True, we in the West are above all that, so the Shiites and the Sunnis can kill a million of one another in the Iraq–Iran war, and we can look down at them all. We of the Christian West know nothing of bombs to blow up Harrods, in the name of Catholic rights in Northern Ireland, for one thing, nor can we point to political parties founded on religious loyalties—except, to be sure, in the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Latin America, and, if truth be told, Australia as well (the Protestants are in the Country Party, the Catholics in Labor). True, we Jews in the West are above all that. Militant in our defense of the separation of church and state, we know nothing of the confusion of state and culture and church, except of course that in the State of Israel the synagogue and the state form a union beyond all sundering. Israeli political parties take positions on matters of the narrowest religious–cultural interest, and, in all, that, among many other societies, totters on the brink of social chaos because of religious conviction. Or, to put it simply, if religion is utterly private (whether trivial or expressive of ultimate concern) why can't you raise pigs in Jerusalem?

The war in Afghanistan sustains itself on religious conviction, the Communist government of Poland confronts religious belief as a social and political force, and American politics, in all its complex and diverse dimensions, no less than Indian politics, demonstrates the power of religion in the real world. Secular enemies of religious studies may wish religion away, but they cannot pretend religion makes no difference. Religion in fact makes all the difference in the world over much of the face of the earth, in South Asia, in the Middle East and North Africa, in Europe, in North America, in South America, in the South Pacific. You cannot understand the world today if you do not grasp the reality of religion as a powerful force in shaping politics and culture, economic action and social organization. That is a fact. When in universities today secular enemies of religious studies deny it, they simply misinform their students about the facts of life. So, when secularists treat religion as too private and idiosyncratic to allow objective description, analysis, and interpretation, they are worse than wrong, they are ignorant because of conviction of a religious character, no different from creationists who cannot study geology because of religion.

No single object of study forms so public and social—indeed, so measurable—a presence as religion. Nothing humanity has made constitutes a less personal, a less private, a less trivial fact of human life than religion. And yet, the secularists in treating religion as too personal to study (if, also, too trivial to warrant study) find allies in an unexpected place, namely, the theologians, mainly Protestant. Here too, as I shall show, we deal with the same view of religion: it is something private and interior, individual and subjective: how I feel all by myself, not what I do with other people. Religion is something you believe, all by yourself, not something you do with other people.

THE INTELLECTUAL PROBLEM

Religion as Mainly a Matter of Faith: Conscience versus Culture

If, as I said earlier, religion is a matter of belief and opinion—not knowledge—then in universities, science will tell us about the world, and the study of religion will not. By that theory, all we study in religion is personal opinion, to which everyone is entitled. If everyone's opinion is the same as everyone else's, then what is there to study? For the normal canons of public reasoned discourse do not apply.

What people commonly identify as the correct object of religious study therefore can bear no consequence. Because the definition of what we study derives from theologians, it follows that, second only to militant secularists, a dying breed on the campus, the theologians of a particular order so define religion as to render it private, personal, something you really cannot study at all, except in books. To state the matter simply: a prevailing attitude of mind, particularly in the academic study of religion, identifies religion with belief, to the near-exclusion of behavior, and in the hands of its academic scholars religion tends to identify itself with faith, so religion is understood as a personal state of mind or an individual's personal and private attitude. When we study religion, the present picture suggests, we ask not about society but self, not about culture and community but about conscience and character. In so stating, I do not point to anecdotal evidence, for example, religious studies courses in such subjects as 'love' or 'anger'. These are idiosyncratic and not indicative. A survey of the programs of the American Academy of Religion and of academic publishing programs shows us far more sustained and intense interest in faith than in works, so to speak, in analysis of propositions of belief than of programs of society and public behavior.

So when we study religion, we tend, in the aggregate, to speak of individuals and not groups: faith and its substance, and, beyond faith, the things that faith represents: faith reified, hence, religion. Let me give as an example the observations by William Scott Green about the definition of Judaism operative in the mind of E. P. Sanders when Sanders describes rabbinic writings. In my debate with Sanders I complained that his categories seem to me improperly formed, because the rabbinic texts do not conform to the taxonomy Sanders utilizes. They in other words are not talking about the things Sanders wants them to discuss.

Sanders, Green says, 'reads rabbinic texts by peering through them for the ideas (presumably ones Jews or rabbis believed) that lie beneath them. He thus ignores what the texts themselves actually talk about, the materials that attracted the attention and interest of the writers'.[1] I pointed out that Sanders' categories ignore what the texts actually say and impose categories the Judaic-rabbinic texts do not know. Sanders, in Green's judgement, introduces a distinct premise:

> For Sanders, the religion of Mishnah lies unspoken beneath its surface; for Neusner it is manifest in Mishnah's own language and preoccupations.[2]

Generalizing on this case, Green further comments in more general terms as follows:

> The basic attitude of mind characteristic of the study of religion holds that religion is certainly in your soul, likely in your heart, perhaps in your mind, but never in your body. That attitude encourages us to construe religion cerebrally and individually, to think in terms of beliefs and the believer, rather than in terms of behavior and community. The lens provided by this prejudice draws out attention to the intense and obsessive belief called 'faith', so religion is understood as a state of mind, the object of intellectual or emotional commitment,

> the result of decisions to believe or to have faith. According to this model, people have religion but they do not do their religion. Thus we tend to devalue behavior and performance, to make it epiphenomenal, and of course to emphasize thinking and reflecting, the practice of theology, as a primary activity of religious people . . . The famous slogan that 'ritual recapitulates myth' follows this model by assigning priority to the story and to peoples' believing the story, and makes behavior simply an imitation, an aping, a mere acting out.[3]

Now as we reflect on Green's observations, we of course recognize what is at stake. It is the definition of religion, or, rather, what matters in or about religion, emerging from Protestant theology and Protestant religious experience. For when we lay heavy emphasis on faith to the exclusion of works, on the individual rather than on society, conscience instead of culture, when we treat behavior and performance by groups as less important and thinking, reflecting, theology and belief as more important, we simply adopt as normative for academic scholarship convictions critical to the Protestant Reformation. Judaism and the historical, classical forms of Christianity, Anglican, Roman Catholic and Orthodox, place emphasis at least equally on religion as a matter of works and not faith alone, behavior and community as well as belief and conscience. Religion is something that people do, and they do it together. Religion is not something people merely have, as individuals. The entire civilization of the West, from the 4th century onward, carried forward the convictions of Christianity, not about the individual alone but about politics and culture, we, therefore, may hardly find surprising the Roman Catholic conviction that religion flourishes not alone in heart and mind, but in eternal social forms: the Church, in former times, the state as well. But for the social and cultural dimensions of religion, the present academic sciences of religion find little space.

Perhaps in the study, as in the practice, of Judaism we place too much emphasis on society and behavior, performance and public action. We may ask too intensively about the relationship between the historical, including political, circumstance of a religious system and the statements of that system. In doing so, we may have carried too far the program of Max Weber in his investigation of the role of religion in economic and other modes of social behavior. But ours, if it is an excess, is idiosyncratic. The excess of others carries them deep into the definitions and convictions of the Protestant sector of Christianity. And, if truth be told, it is the Lutheran sector of Protestant Christianity that has taught us about the introspective conscience of the West, so we may hardly find astonishing the remarkable congruence between the academic study of religion in Germany and Lutheran conviction about what matters in religion. In fact, the academic study of religion derives its deepest convictions from theology, not from descriptive modes of learning.

I therefore identify as the enemies of the academic study of religion those who bring to the subject the fundamental attitude toward religion deriving from Protestant theology. Green phrases matters in this way:

> The Protestant prejudice encourages us not to listen to what people actually say and not to watch what they actually do, but to suppose that these tractables are mere reflections of some underlying belief that is the ultimate grounding of the religious life. We need to reshape our collective curiosity and transcend the boundaries of this intellectual prejudice to acquire a fuller picture of the richness of religions as they are lived, acted, and performed—that is, to understand religions as we find them.[4]

Now I hasten to add, we have no reason to find the dominance of Protestant attitudes toward religion surprising. After all, the academic study of religion in America originated among Protestant scholars of religion.

The openness to diversity, the interest in the other, the capacity to pursue an other-than-narrow-theological program constitute the glories of the academic study of religion in America, and they are the gifts of Protestant scholars of religion. I should argue, moreover, that only Protestants could have so shaped the field—Protestants of a particular order, to be sure. For they are the ones who took seriously and responded to the program of the Enlightenment, with its interest in a critical examination of religion. They are the ones who saw the study of religion as a generalizing science. No one else did, and few today try to generalize at all. The Protestants are the ones who asked not only about religions but also about religion. They are the ones who invited to give testimony not only those they understood but also those they did not understand. It was they who founded the academic study of religion in this country and not the Jewish scholars, and not the Roman Catholic scholars.

Indeed, the Jews to this day make no provision in their academic institutions, either in this country or, all the more so, in the State of Israel, for the academic study of religion. The Association for Jewish Studies program from year to year contains little that any scholar of the academic study of religion could identify as the religious study of Judaism (as distinct from the ethnic celebration of Judaism). No institution of Jewish origin or sponsorship in the U.S.A. or in the State of Israel or in Europe has a fully articulated department of religious studies (Jerusalem's is really a one-man show), not Brandeis, not Yeshiva University, no seminary anywhere.

As to the Roman Catholics, the picture of course presents a brighter color. Yet the Roman Catholics study, in the encounter with other religions, principally topics that illuminate the relationship to (Roman Catholic) Christianity.[5] So what interests 'our crowd' continues to define what we want to know: the larger realm of interest. It is as if, in the study of Paul, what struck me as most important is the fact that he permitted people to eat pork. That would represent an interest, in Paul, as narrow as characterizes Roman Catholic interest in Judaism. How so? Interest in Judaism focuses mainly on Judaism in the period of Christian origins, on the one side, and the Jewish–Christian dialogue today, on the other—that is, once more, what 'our crowd' wants to know. Judaism as a religion interesting in its own right, that is to say, *Judaism as an example of religion in general*, does not define the academic program commonly represented in Roman Catholic departments of religious studies, all the more so in journals of religious studies published under Roman Catholic auspices. (Those journals rarely review books on Judaism or other religions, for example.) True enough, the Protestant tradition of religious studies leads to an equivalently parochial interest in the religions of other parts of the world, as the established missionary concern in the relationship between 'Christianity' and 'Hinduism' retains a paramount position. Still, in all, the Protestants created whatever is truly academic—broad, descriptive, analytical, consequential and rigorous —in the academic study of religion.

Where we are strong, there is our weakness, our power is our pathos. That fundamental universality of vision and catholicity of sympathy, the interest in the other, that led to the creation of the academic study of religion we owe to our Protestant founders. But, as I have argued, what we study when we study religion also finds definition in their vision. As Green says, our intense interest in faith instead of religion as a social fact and a cultural determinant derives from our origins in Protestant theology, as that theology took shape at a particular moment in the history of American Protestant thought, on the one side, and American culture, on the other. I refer, of course, to the simple fact that our new, young field traces its origins to the immediate years after World War II, when America entered a position of world consequence. Then we had to pay attention to the 'other', in all of the infinite diversity of humanity, in ways in which, before that time, we as a nation did not. The Protestant founders of the academic study of religion, the creators of the departments of religious studies we now find exemplary— they made a formidable contribution to the nation's capacity to confront the other and to sort out difference.

But the field has outgrown its origins. A program or concentration in religious studies no longer can constitute a minor detail, a service-program, of a divinity school, as is the case at Harvard. For the Harvard Divinity School has no interest in the serious and rigorous study of other religions than Protestant Christianity. That fact is suggested by, among other facts, its disposition of the Stillman Chair in Roman Catholic Christianity, employed to bring to Harvard a great New Testament scholar, who just happened to be a Jesuit. The Harvard Divinity School serves as a professional school for ministers, and that is quite proper; it also achieves distinction in some of the academic subjects important in the education of Protestant ministers, and that is quite proper. It has no serious interest in those academic subjects important in the study of religion that play no role in the life of the Protestant churches, and why should it? As to the University of Chicago Divinity School, the picture is different, but the upshot the same. Judaism in its post-Old Testament period is not represented on that faculty. That school's curricular categories by definition exclude Judaism as a possible object of study. When we turn to the two most important state university systems, California and New York, the picture is only moderately encouraging. The California system treats religious studies as a department only at the University of California at Santa Barbara, and the New York system only at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, which last year founded its department. So the state university systems deliver a powerful message indeed.

In referring to two particular divinity schools and the two greatest state systems, I mean only to form a bridge to my next point: the field of religious studies presently has not attained institutionalization in well-composed departments. If we looked deeply at the reason that Berkeley has a great department of English and history but no department at all in religious studies, we should find that the University has laid its responsibility for the study on the shoulders of the neighboring divinity schools. The faculty chooses to treat religion as peripheral, private, something that, in the main, people can study if they like, but people can ignore without missing much. History is not done by people on the fringes of the campus. Religion is. That is why the qualification for a professorship in the study of Judaism, defined by a committee chaired by a person who served as the dean of the Berkeley graduate school for eighteen years, includes capacity to help build the local Jewish community! But now the reason is clear: the problem is theological, not political. It is theological in two sides, the secular and the religious alike.

But this is a problem that can be solved. If the great universities of the country are to take the lead in shaping the study of religion as an entirely academic enterprise, the Protestants will have to show the way. That means in institutional terms the reorganization of the field in the leading universities, and, in theological terms, the willingness to treat as critical aspects of religion those social and cultural dimensions of religion that, nowadays, academic scholars tend to neglect: religion as what forms and frames politics and culture, society and the public life.

Still, in all fairness, when, in universities, the Protestant vision prevails, the reason lies not entirely with the Protestants. The vision of religion as private and idiosyncratic, individual and therefore unimportant, that vision surely conforms to the other legacy of the Enlightenment for all who take up the subject of religion. I refer to that heritage of ridicule and disdain, that academic attitude that treats religion as trivial and personal and private.

That indictment of religion characteristic of the militantly secular world constituted, in the aggregate, by academic learning today finds expedient the theologically profound Protestant insistence that religion must matter in here, not only out there, and that the condition of my soul counts. So even in defense of the Protestant academic heritage of us all, we have now to take up the challenge of the theological enemies of religious studies. For Protestant, not to mention Judaic and Catholic, theology cannot concede religion is merely private, merely personal, therefore always trivial. But if religion is public, social, a matter of political behavior and economic action, as it is, then when we study religion, these dimensions of faith—the context of conviction and conscience, the politics of belief—serve as the measure of success: these and not mere belief.

THE PROBLEM OF THE IMPERFECT INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE STUDY OF RELIGION

While the enemies of religious studies come to us from opposing directions—secular and theological alike—some of the enemies are within. They are scholars who do not take the study of religion seriously, who do whatever they wish and call it the study of religion. To identify them, let me begin by citing the words of a leading theorist on the humanities, Richard Ekman. Writing about the humanities, he says, 'The humanities are fields that do have internal standards . . . the humanities are a body of ideas, texts, and knowledge of lasting significance, as well as a set of analytical skills that transcend the fields in which they are initially learned . . .'.[6] If Ekman is right, then internal standards should characterize the academic study of religion. We should identify a body of ideas, texts, knowledge that we concur matters. We should specify those analytical skills we teach that people can carry into other fields. Above all, our field should have reached the level of appropriate institutionalization that lends recognition to people who meet high standards, who present important ideas and provide knowledge of lasting significance. People who exhibit analytical skills that transcend the field of religious studies should enjoy recognition in religious studies. All of these *shoulds* indicate the deplorable fact: should but presently do not. Proof of the intellectual limitations of the field derives from the institutionalization of the field. Let me explain.

A field that is properly institutionalized is one in which excellence enjoys recognition. The top people are in the most distinguished universities, the second rank of scholars in the second rank of universities, good but merely adequate scholars in the better liberal arts colleges, and on and on. A consensus of standards and values dictates what is good and identifies what is shoddy. Charlatans and fools find no hearing, and no one can claim, anything goes. Politics plays a slight role in publication, journals open their pages to genuinely professional exchange of views, and most scholars have a stake in rigorous debate. Above all, when major appointments come up for disposition, solid achievement in scholarship forms the preeminent criterion (if not the only one). So a field that enjoys the correct institutionalization of learning follows rules. These rules guarantee the intellectual integrity of the field of study, that is why they constitute rules. The academic study of religion in America—the only place in which the field flourishes—is a new, young field. Hence we have no reason to expect the field to have attained complete institutionalization and, as a matter of fact, it has not. Let me explain the matter by reference to facts on which most people can concur: where the field is carried on in an influential way, the places from which important books and articles flow.

Secular and public universities do not make a serious commitment to this field in the way that they do to other academic fields. If we simply compare the standing and status of the academic study of religion at Harvard, University of California at Berkeley, Stanford, Texas, Michigan, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, and even Chicago, with the standing and status of the academic study of history, physics, or economics at those same universities, the picture becomes clear. You can have a truly great university without first-rate study of religion, but you cannot have a truly great university without distinguished study of history or economics: that seems the general agreement. So those universities pay attention to religion either as an aspect of theology (Harvard, for example) or as a rather trivial and peripheral subject (Berkeley, Texas, Michigan, for example). The academic study of religion at those universities to be sure enjoys some prestige because it is located in those universities, but the field within those universities cannot claim the same truly distinguished standing as do other fields in those same universities. Berkeley is not great in everything, but it is in most things—but not in religion, and the same is to be said of Yale and Princeton. The agreement of secular and theological factors keeps it that way at some of those places, and a consensus that the field does not deal with important and public inquiry reenforces the policy.

The truly first-rate academic study of religion in this country (I do not make reference to Canada or Britain) goes on not at the truly distinguished universities, but elsewhere. And where is that? It is anywhere and everywhere, a matter of happenstance, that is, in the studies of individual scholars. The point is that there is no preeminent place, no center, for the academic study of religion. What about Chicago, the biggest, once the best? Chicago's now-eroding dominance is political, not intellectual. It is the vestige of a once-effective alumni network and its institutional decision to admit vast entering graduate classes made up of enormous numbers of students, not all of them very distinguished. That hardly suggests no one of eminence finds employment at the best universities, only that in the aggregate, the best universities are not best in the academic study of religion; they are not even second best. Why not? To state matters I believe most people can affirm, the academic study of religion at Harvard, Stanford, Berkeley, and most of the other standard names does not carry the weight, the intellectual influence, that the study of other subjects and disciplines in these same universities carries. For one thing, Harvard has no department of religious studies, nor does Chicago, nor does University of California at Berkeley nor does UCLA. So here we see in the simplest form the imperfect institutionalization of the field. But in the generality of academic subjects, for example, physics, classics, English, and history, the Yales, Harvards, and Stanfords and Berkeleys of this country do stand out in ways in which, in the academic study of religion, they do not.

The same point finds re-enforcement in other ways. When a history department makes a chaired appointment in history, it ordinarily appoints a historian, and physics departments prefer physicists. But chaired appointments in departments of religious studies for, e.g. Judaism, go to historians or literary critics, and no eyebrows are raised. No one really cares. When chairs in chemistry go hunting for occupants, no one asks about the capacity of a prospective holder to enhance the attractiveness of chemistry among the chemists in business and industries in the local area, but when chairs in religious studies are to be filled, holders are expected to help build the local religious communities of the religion under study by the holder of the chair. And this requirement for employment, as I said, was found plausible at the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley even by the long-term dean of the Graduate School of the University of California, who chaired the search committee.[7] What becomes clear is a simple fact. The academic study of religion in this country differs from the academic study of other subjects, so that the ordinary rules that apply do not dictate the criteria for major appointments as usually-great universities. And other rules do apply.

One reason for this, I think, may be stated very simply. The academic study of religion comes late on the scene. So the field has not yet attained that level of institutionalization, within the academy, that will guarantee the application of the rules of the academy. The most important of these rules is that quality matters. Excellence in research counts. Productivity of an intellectual character weighs in the balance. We have every right to expect a physicist at Columbia or UCLA to lead the field, to produce more and better articles than a physicist at Southern Methodist University or Vanderbilt University. Rising universities, such as University of Texas, should rise in this field too. Why? Because in the hierarchy of universities, Texas, Columbia and UCLA enjoy far greater resources and eminence, in the aggregate attract overall more aggressive and ambitious intellects, and in a variety of fields take a position of preeminence. But, as I said, in the field of religious studies the ordinary rules do not apply. Texas is not ready to be ranked, Columbia is merely all right, UCLA *hors de combat*, and so on.

The point? Excellence in the academic study of religion flourishes wherever it flourishes, a matter of happenstance, an adventitious benefit to universities puzzled at their own excellence in a field they do not fully grasp. For when the rules do not apply, then a Southern Methodist University has a Schubert Ogden, but many others of standing, a Claremont Graduate School has James Robinson, but many others of intellectual vitality, while one looks hard to find the equivalent *groups* of paragons of intellectual leadership at universities ordinarily admired for the truly rigorous standards of their senior appointments.

THE ACADEMIC STUDY OF RELIGION AT THE CENTER OF THE CURRICULUM

The academic study of religion has not yet grasped its own centrality to the study of humanity, past and present. That is why nothing matters very much and little is at stake, so people can pursue their private agenda. Self-indulgence masks disdain for the subject—even among the learned teachers of that subject. If we all concur that we cannot understand the record of humanity without paying close attention to religion, then we should want to know about religion, and we should want our knowledge to reach a level of precision and specificity. Our principal concern should not be whether religions were 'right' or 'wrong', but what religion is, how it works, what difference it makes in the politics and social life, economic action and cultural expression, of the nations and societies that take shape and find expression, in particular, in religion. True, when we study religion we also want to know about its intellectual aspect: the teachings of religion. But those teachings come to us in books, not in the personal feelings or opinions of this believer or that one, and the canon presents the faith, not the heart of the individual believer—except, to be sure, after the fact. When theologians treat religion as personal, they do no less to trivialize religion than when secularists treat it as private. From both sides religion finds itself denied its principal trait: it beats as the heart and the soul of humanity's social life. Religion serves as arbiter of culture and source of the values of politics and economy alike. Religion defines the public life of humanity. It is public and visible, therefore subject to description, reasoned analysis, and sustained, rigorous interpretation. And I am inclined to think that—for the rest of our life on earth, whether that is one more year or one million—religion will endure, definitive and decisive, in the framing of what it means to be human, therefore to be like God. If I may conclude with my own theological conviction out of Judaism's understanding of humanity after the fall, '"they will be like God",—that is to say, creators of worlds'.

NOTES

1 Personal letter, 17 January, 1985.

2 William Scott Green in his Introduction, *Approaches to Ancient Judaism* (Chicago, 1980: Scholars Press for Brown Judaic Studies) II, xxi.

3 Personal letter, 17 January, 1985.

4 Personal letter, 17 January, 1985.

5 The Protestant divinity schools do the same. When they have a position in Judaism, they define it in terms of their existing theological conviction. The importance of the study of Judaism therefore derives from its relevance to Protestant theological education. The fact that, even now, the academic study of Judaism does not find a place at the Divinity Schools of Harvard University and the University of Chicago speaks for itself. The old mission-sciences make a (somewhat awkward) place for Buddhism or Islam, even the ecumenical side of Judaism—but not for the study of Judaism. For a religion to be studied outside of its relationship to Christianity, all religions must be treated as exemplary and suggestive for a common program of inquiry. Divinity School faculties cannot ask themselves to take up such a program of study; it is not their task. It should be the task of the academy.

6 Richard Ekman, The Feasibility of Higher Education Reform in the Humanities. *Liberal Education* **71** (1985) 274.

7 But he chaired the search committee not as an experienced dean, but as a Jew who also was a leading academic figure, and that is not the same thing. Is there another chair at Berkeley subject to a search by a committee whose chair is chosen on the basis of racial or ethnic qualification, except in subjects for which the generality of the academy has contempt, such as black, or women's, or Chicano, or Jewish studies? In those fields—I have the impression—black chemists or women-biologists do not accept the chair of search committees, while Jewish biologists or chemists or political scientists do. The Koshland Chair search committee at Stanford included Jews who are professors in such fields as the French Enlightenment, 19th-century British History, and Chinese studies, not to mention an associate dean. For sheer professional incompetence, the Koshland committee surely has few counterparts in Stanford's history. The fact is hardly unique to Stanford. The academy treats with contempt the entire range of the new humanities, including Judaic studies—and why not, given the special pleading that, in the new humanities, takes the place of cogent and general discourse about important propositions and possibilities?

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THE ACADEMIC STUDY OF RELIGION IN NIGERIA[1]

Rosalind I. J. Hackett

This article examines the ways in which the academic study of religion has developed in the Nigerian context, notably at the hands of its own scholars. The distinctive identity of the subject in Nigeria and its contribution to the field in general are highlighted, as well as some of the problems and advantages of teaching Religious Studies in a developing country.

INTRODUCTION

Few people outside Africa are aware that a country like Nigeria, for example, has been pursuing the academic study of religion for nearly four decades. Since the first department of Religious Studies was inaugurated at the University College of Ibadan (then a branch of the University of London) in 1949 by J. W. Welch and Geoffrey Parrinder,[2] a number of departments of Religious Studies have been established at Nsukka, Jos, Calabar, Lagos, Ilorin and Benin City as well as in many colleges of education.[3] It is fair to say, therefore, that the subject has become an established tradition within Nigerian institutions of higher learning, even if there have been some deviations in its orientation from the original founding vision. Religion is also taught as an academic subject on a global and cross-cultural basis, in a number of different guises, at the many seminaries and Bible colleges throughout the country. A Nigerian Association for the Study of Religion has been in operation since the 1970s and is represented on the Executive Committee of the International Association for the History of Religions.[4]

Returning to the founding myth, it was believed that a department of Religious Studies, with a comparative rather than a theological or confessional basis, would be more appropriate for Nigeria with its tripartite religious heritage—Islam, Christianity and the traditional religions. Andrew Walls outlines the historical significance of such a move:

> In pluralist Nigeria a Department of Divinity could not be so appropriate as in Fourah Bay or the Gold Coast: a Department of Religious Studies was established instead, with Geoffrey Parrinder as its first lecturer. There was no Department of Religious Studies anywhere in Britain at that time. Departments of Religious Studies as we now know them in Britain were born in West Africa, the product

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> of conditions of a plural society where religion is a massive, unignorable, fact of life. And Geoffrey Parrinder found himself teaching what no-one had ever taught him—what, perhaps no-one had ever taught at university level before: a course in the Indigenous Religious Beliefs of West Africa.[5]

It is worth noting also that Parrinder's first book, *West African Religion*, which appeared the same year as he was appointed to Ibadan, was innovative in that it treated several African peoples comparatively, and that it treated them in terms of their religion. He also advocated that African religions should be studied in the same way and by the same methods as the 'world religions'.[6]

In this paper I intend to examine the ways in which the academic study of religion has developed within the Nigerian context, notably at the hands of its own scholars. It is not my intention to offer a systematic survey of the subject in Nigeria, but rather to discern its distinctive identity and contribution to the field in general and identify some of the advantages and problems of teaching Religious Studies in a developing country.[7]

THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT

The study of religion in Nigeria has evolved a number of identifying characteristics. First, there is an inbuilt conviction that religion is a powerful, living reality and central component in people's lives and worldviews and not a mere epiphenomenon of human existence. Nigerian scholars have argued that religion, as both independent and dependent variable, is as important an object of study in the country as say, politics or economics. Religion in Africa as a whole, they claim, does not have the marginal role or status that characterizes it in some Western countries. 'Secularization' and 'invisible religion' are virtually unknown terms.

Given the more homogeneous and less differentiated structure of traditional African societies, many of the studies of Nigerian traditional or 'primal' religions have naturally emphasized their 'embeddedness' in the socio-cultural context. While it has been left to those with more anthropological leanings to pursue these structural relationships on a more systematic basis, these studies nonetheless serve as living examples of the integration of religion and society, countering the tendency by some Western scholars to isolate religious phenomena.

Furthermore, the absence or unavailability of written records and documents for many traditional religions and new religious movements has meant that researchers such as myself, have had to make use of fieldwork based on interviewing and participant observatory techniques. I might also add here that the shortage of secondary sources in a developing country like Nigeria (notably since the economic recession began in the late 1970s) has forced students, both postgraduate and undergraduate, to go out into the field to collect data for their essays and projects. A number of them have chosen to examine the traditional belief systems and the processes of religious change in their home areas.[8] This has had some (unforeseen) beneficial consequences for the subject in that it has ensured a constant flow of primary data and important feedback from the local religious milieu, as well as initiating students at an early stage into fieldwork techniques.[9] It has also served to instill in Nigerian students an interest in and critical awareness of their own religious environments. While at the University of Calabar, for example, I designed a course on New Religious Movements in Africa for the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Calabar, which incorporated field research. As part of the course requirements, students were assigned to a particular movement in town and were expected to write a report based on sustained participant observation and interviews with members and church leaders. It proved to be a valuable experience for all concerned and by the second year some church leaders were even requesting student researchers!

A special interest has been shown by Nigerian scholars and researchers in their own indigenous religious heritage. The task of documenting and describing the traditional religious worlds of a multiplicity of ethnic and sub-ethnic groups is a seemingly endless one. Monographs by Idowu (*Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*), Arinze (*Sacrifice in Ibo Religion*), Awolalu (*Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*) and Tasie (*Kalabari Traditional Religion*) have contributed to the growing, but still insufficient literature on African religions.[10] Generally speaking these works lack historical dimension.[11] Several scholars have been led to discuss African traditional religions on a wider scale. In response to the tendency by anthropologists to emphasize the diversity of African cultures and worldviews, Professor Bolaji Idowu, for example, in his book on *African Traditional Religion: a Definition*, argues for the underlying unity of African traditional religious beliefs and practices, notably concerning the concept of the Supreme Being.[12] The debate continues over whether it is more accurate to refer to African traditional *religion* or *religions* although there is a move towards the use of both terms depending on the context. The attempt by Nigerian scholars to emphasize the common, homogeneous aspects of African religions rather than their heterogeneity represents in part a conviction that African religion as a field in the history of religions, has suffered neglect and mistreatment. It also stems from the more general quest for a national and continental integration. In this way they have stimulated more comparative scholars to include Africa in their general works on the world's religions.[13]

There has been an over-emphasis, indeed some would say an obsession, by Nigerian scholars, of the concept of the Supreme Being in traditional African religious thought.[14] Referring to this as the 'Devout' approach, Robin Horton in a lengthy and incisive article entitled 'Judaeo-Christian Spectacles: Boon or Bane to the Study of African Religions?' analyses and criticizes the scholars (both African and Western) who perpetuate this type of interpretation.[15] Rosalind Shaw, who taught for a number of years at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, has associated this 'theological' tradition in Nigerian Religious Studies with the lack of concern for semantic and historical detail and lack of interest in religious forms themselves but rather in the way they approximate to Judeo-Christian forms.[16] This 'Judeo-Christian straightjacket' is, in her opinion, attributable to the primacy of religions with written texts in Religious Studies everywhere.[17] As she points out for Igbo religion, and the same applies to the Yoruba, the best analysis and interpretation of religious data is often done by scholars in other disciplines, less tainted by ideological perspectives.[18] The time is ripe for a 'de-missionizing' of Religious Studies, similar to the process of decolonization which occurred in African historical studies.

Particular attention has been devoted in both teaching and research to the interaction and continuity between the traditional and Christian worldviews, as well as the wider religious and socio-cultural changes occasioned by the advent of Christianity and Islam and the differing responses to these two world religions now well rooted in the Nigerian milieu.[19] The proliferation of new religious movements in Nigeria since the turn of the century has provided some attractive and important raw data which has been exploited chiefly by historians and sociologists and anthropologists of religion.[20] Harold Turner, writing of the study of Africa's independent churches in general, argues that this is making an important contribution to the phenomenology and history of religion because it is leading scholars of the latter into areas previously left to anthropologists.[21] There are also rich rewards for phenomenological study as the new churches and movements provide ample evidence of the characteristic forms of religion: sacred mountains, holy cities, revealed languages, sacred scripts, festivals, etc. The fact that many of these movements have appeared in periods of rapid social change means that the historian may document the rise of new religious traditions within a single generation.[22]

An important secondary effect of the work of the University departments has been in terms of stimulating advanced theological studies in Church institutions, notably, but not exclusively Roman Catholic. There have been a number of major, landmark studies of Nigerian Christianity by Nigerian scholars, using local oral as well as archival sources.

In terms of teaching and publication, little interest has been shown by Nigerian scholars in methodological or theoretical issues which is regrettable when one considers how African religions have suffered at the hands of different observers. There is an urgent need for analysis and consistency with regard to typology and terminology. While it is not uncommon to hear

Nigerian academics advocating the study of religion as an autonomous discipline, this is generally interpreted to mean that it is necessary to define a sacred territory accessible to theologians and clerics, and in some cases, historians of religion, but inaccessible to the proponents of reductionism, namely the social scientists of this world. In some cases one may also detect an implicit assumption that past misinterpretations of African religions were in part due to the writer's non-African origins and that ethnic identity ('our forefathers') is equivalent to being an authority on a particular worldview. In general, however, such parochialism is secondary to recognition of scholarship, i.e. knowledge of a people and its language, or movement/institution and sustained fieldwork.

A number of younger Nigerian scholars, particularly those trained on the North American continent, have developed a much-needed social-scientific perspective in addition to their phenomenological approach. To cite two scholars whose work I am familiar with, Jacob Kehinde Olupona (Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife) and Friday M. Mbon (University of Calabar), the former has been much influenced by the work of Peter Berger and Robert Bellah and the latter by Max Weber and Bryan Wilson. Olupona has applied the civil religion thesis to his analysis of traditional religious festivals in the town of Ondo, western Nigeria and is editing a collection of writings on *Religion and Society in Nigeria.* He rightly argues that there is an urgent need for scholars of religion to bring their much-needed cross-cultural and analytical perspectives to the role of religion in modern Nigerian politics, instead of relying on the limited and biased perspectives of clerics.[23] An obvious case is the recent controversy over the decision by the military government to join the Organization of Islamic Conferences (Nigeria is a secular state). Mbon, who has conducted extensive fieldwork on a major Nigerian religious movement—the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star, is currently exploring concepts of religious authority among the leaders of Nigeria's new religious movements.

In general, Nigeria's departments of Religious Studies have failed to do justice to the Islamic component in their curricula. Islamicists have preferred to operate within the departments of Arabic or Islamic Studies, such as at the University of Ibadan. There is also increasing pressure to limit the teaching of Islam to Muslims alone. Nor has there been much attention paid to those religious traditions (such as Hinduism and Buddhism) with which Nigerians have little contact. This needs to be reviewed for there are many affinities between the Indian and Nigerian religious situations, for example. In sum, therefore, Nigerian scholars have concentrated their teaching energies on biblical studies, church history, theology and traditional worldviews. The majority of Religious Studies departments have some form of Introduction to Religious Studies and Comparative Religion courses. Rarer are those courses such as Religion and Society/Sociology of Religion, Anthropology of

Religion, or the African Independent Churches. The University of Calabar has provision for a course on Secular Alternatives to Religion. I am not aware of any department offering a course on 'Women and Religion'.

PURPOSES OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

For those who have first-hand experience of developing countries, there is little need to emphasize the importance of the religious phenomenon at both the individual and societal levels. Nigeria's departments of Religious Studies have not always capitalized on this from an academic point of view, preferring sometimes to concentrate on the educational and moral value of studying religion on a comparative basis in a religiously pluralistic country. To the desire for tolerance is added the awareness of the function of religion as an integrative and legitimating force. These factors help explain the persistence of the subject at all levels of the educational system, despite its image as a relatively non-marketable and even non-academic subject. This type of recognition by the authorities does not necessarily reflect the real *raison d'être* of Religious Studies. We should not, however, underestimate the pressures on academics, particularly in a perceived minority subject such as Religious Studies, to defend their cause and align themselves to the pragmatic and utilitarian objectives of a developing country.[24] While it is possible to detect a general belief that religion is a positive force in Nigerian society, the recent (1980, 1982, etc.) incidents of religious extremism in the form of an Islamic sect, known as the Maitatsine movement, have kindled fears about the negative and dysfunctional aspects of some religious groups. Several Nigerians have voiced the need to understand, even anticipate, such extremist religious responses; some have gone further and questioned the 'unbridled' religious growth which characterizes Nigeria today.[25] These are important contemporary issues to which scholars of religion should contribute their knowledge and insight. In addition, the theories and insights which emerge from the study of religious data may be used to help illuminate secular ideologies such as nationalism.[26]

An often overlooked advantage of the study of religion, when it is taught as an academic subject and not as propaganda, is the fact that students acquire a number of important methodological skills, particularly the ability to deal with competing cultural paradigms. They also learn how to bracket or suspend their own value-judgements as part of the quest for empathetic understanding and scientific objectivity. These skills take on an increasing value in the context of a developing country characterized by a highly competitive religious pluralism.

Student interest in the subject is generally high, although not many (apart from intending professionals such as clergy, nuns and religious educators) decide to specialize in religion. They generally come to take courses in Religious Studies in the belief that it is an advanced version of the religious education they have received at secondary school level. Many have an 'O' Level qualification in either Christian or Islamic Religious Knowledge. While this may serve as a useful foundation in some respects, it may also hinder initial comprehension of Religious Studies which does not have the confessional and moral orientation of religious knowledge or religious education.

The relatively small number of graduates in the subject has in turn affected the number of people qualified to teach the subject. Many senior scholars hold theological degrees and have only come to emphasize the comparative and humanistic side of their work in their later careers; some of the newer universities appointed clerics in the absence of academics. These factors have had an adverse effect in that such individuals favoured a normative as opposed to a non-normative approach, failing to distinguish between sermons and lectures, and parishioners and students.[27] Many students have been discouraged by such confessionalism; it has also nurtured amongst academic colleagues the notion that Religious Studies departments were 'glorified Sunday schools' more concerned with teaching religion than learning about it.[28] Some universities in an attempt to preserve their secular identity are precluding the appointment of theologically oriented academics and insisting on a more pluralistic and comparative curriculum. The department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of Port Harcourt, under the leadership of Robin Horton, is an example of this trend; Christianity is ascribed no *a priori* primacy.

Departments of Religious Studies are being called upon increasingly, as the result of financial stringencies, to justify their *raison d'être*. This is an important stimulus to self-examination and may lead to a departure from an over-emphasis on theology, church history and the descriptive phenomenology of traditional beliefs and practices. In addition the growing intake of students from non-mainline religious organizations is also proving to be a significant impetus. The presence of Muslim students or students who belong to one or other of the many independent churches or new religious movements is undermining the monopoly of the mainline Christian denominations in some departments and broadening the scope of research interests and discussion. It may also have a negative effect, however, in that students who are members of extreme fundamentalist Christian or Muslim sects may oppose dialogue and criticize the cross-cultural and humanistic objectives of the subject.

From an academic point of view, Nigeria contains a treasure trove of data for researchers in religion.[29] Further documentation is eagerly awaited on the various traditional religions;[30] the evolution of Nigerian Christianity and Nigerian Islam will continue to provide interesting material for those interested in the processes of indigenization and contextualization. Topics such as women's religious roles and experience, the relationship between magic and religion, and the sacred/secular distinction all merit further discussion in the Nigerian context with a view to enriching and even reorienting wider theoretical debates. As a forum for religious change and innovation and the religious response to social change in the context of a developing nation, Nigeria represents an important area of potential research. The new religious movements especially merit further study regarding the ways in which they create new meaning-systems in the face of moral and social dislocation. Nigeria's new breed of scholars needs to be encouraged and convinced that Nigerian Religious Studies may constitute a challenge to the academic hegemony of Western scholars and their attendant ethnocentric concepts and categories and preoccupation with Western and Eastern religions. It may also provide an important basis for the re-examination of some time-honoured concepts and theories.

It is, therefore, imperative that the study of religion as an autonomous discipline continues in Nigeria, not just for the sake of the international academic community, but for Nigerians themselves who need to be informed of their religious past, present and future. This important task should not be confined to journalists, government officials, religious authorities, historians or even social scientists. Scholars of religion with their historical, phenomenological and anthropological grounding are arguably the best equipped for such a mission.

NOTES

1 This article is a slightly amended version of a paper read at the 1986 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, Georgia, 22–25 November in the Consultation on the History of the Study of Religion.

2 See G. Parrinder, Religious Foundations at Ibadan, in *Ibadan Voices* (T. N. Tamuno, ed.). Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1981, pp. 102–108.

3 In the north of Nigeria, a number of higher education institutions have departments for Islamic Religious Knowledge, often combined with the Hausa Language; courses in Christian Religious Knowledge will be offered for non-Muslim students. Students are generally expected to take courses only in their own religious tradition. Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria has separate departments for the study of Christian Religion and Islamic Religion.

4 Professor J. O. Awolalu, Head of the Department of Religious Studies of the University of Ibadan.

5 A. F. Walls, A Bag of Needments for the Road: Geoffrey Parrinder and the Study of Religion in Britain, *Religion* **10** (1980) 144.

6 Ibid.

7 Cf. K. A. Dickson, Research in the History of Religions in West Africa, *Religion* **1** (1975) 91–93. The present chapter is based on eight years of teaching and researching religion in Nigeria. My primary affiliations were with the Departments of Religious Studies in Ibadan and Calabar.

8 See for example, Sister M. J. Ada and E. Isichei, Perceptions of God and the Churches in Obudu, *Journal of Religion in Africa* **7**(3) (1975) 165–173, which is based upon the fieldwork of Sister Ada in Obudu for an undergraduate project at the University of Jos.

9 Cf. the seminar held by the Department of Religion, University of Nigeria, Nsukka on 'Religion in Nsukka', March 1983.

10 E. Bolaji Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, London: Longman, 1962. F. Arinze, *Sacrifice in Ibo Religion*, Ibadan, 1970; J. O. Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, Longman: London, 1979. G. O. M. Tasie, *Kalabari Traditional Religion*, Marburger Studien zur Africa, 9, Berlin: Reimer, 1977.

11 Cf. T. O. Ranger and I. Kimambo (eds), *The Historical Study of African Religion*. Heinemann: London, 1972.

12 SCM Press: London, 1973. See also E. Ikenga-Metuh, *God and Man in African Religion*, Chapman: London, 1981, and J. O. Awolalu and P. Dopamu (eds), *West African Traditional Religion*, Ibadan, 1979.

13 See for example, N. Smart, *The Religious Experience of Mankind*, 2nd edn., New York: Charles Scribners and Sons, 1976, which added a section on African religions in the second edition.

14 A recent example is Emefie Ikenga-Metuh's *God and Man in African Religion: A Case Study of the Igbo of Nigeria* (1981). In contrast, Donatus Nwoga's *The Supreme God as Stranger in Igbo Religious Thought* (Ekwereazu, Ahiazu Mbiase, Imo State, Nigeria, Hawk Press, 1984) challenges the pre-eminence of the Supreme God concept.

15 R. Horton, Judaeo-Christian Spectacles: Boon or Bane to the Study of Arican Religions?, *Cahiers d'etudes africaines* **96**(24–4) (1984) 391–436.

16 Personal communication, 28 August 1986. See also her *African Cosmologies and Religious Practice: An Introduction* (in preparation for Routledge, Kegan and Paul) and 'The Enshrining of Cosmology and Society: Approaches to the Study of Nsukka Igbo Shrines', *West African Religion* **21**(1/2) (1986), where she discusses the range of approaches to sacred places by Igbo scholars and students.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibe Chukwukere, M. A. Onwuejeogwu and C. N. Ubah (social anthropology); Chike Aniakor (art history); Adiele Afigbo (history); Donatus Nwoga (literature). Ogbu Kalu, who has played a major role in the subject at Nsukka and further afield, is primarily a historian. Amongst Yoruba scholars we should mention Wande Abimbola (literature); Roland Abiodun (art history); J. F. Ajayi, E. A. Ayandele (history).

19 See for example, E. Ilogu, *Christianity and Ibo Culture*, New York: Nok Publishers, 1974.

20 See for example: J. Akinyele Omoyajowo, *Cherubim and Seraphim: The History of an African Independent Church*, New York: Nok Publishers International, 1982; K. Enang, *The African Experience of Salvation*, London: M & C Publishing, 1986; R. I. J. Hackett (ed.), *New Religious Movements in Nigeria*. Lewiston, N. Y., The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987.

21 H. W. Turner, The Contribution of Studies on Religion in Africa to Western Religious Studies. In *Religious Innovation in Africa*, Boston: G. K. Hall, 1979, pp. 212–13.

22 Ibid. Cf. J. P. Kiernan, Themes and Trends in the Study of Black Religion in Southern Africa, *Journal of Religion in Africa* **12**(2) (1981) 136–147.

23 Personal communication, 5 August 1986. See the First Annual Religious Studies Conference, organized by the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ife, 4–7 June 1986, on Religion, Medicine and Healing in Nigeria. See J. K. Olupona, Beyond ethnicity: civil religion in Nigeria, *Church Divinity Monograph* (1982).

24 As part of the rationalization exercise being conducted by the Military Government in the university sector, a government white paper was produced in early 1986 which recommended that the teaching of African Traditional Religions be phased out in two designated universities (one of which was Ife). This paper was rejected by the Committee of Vice Chancellors and further developments are awaited.

25 See, for example, *Concord Weekly* (Lagos), 18 February 1985.

26 See N. Smart, Scientific Phenomenology and Wilfred Cantwell Smith's Misgivings. In F. Whaling (ed.), *The World's Religious Traditions*, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1984, p. 260.

27 This is similar to the situation described by Benjamin Ray in North America, see, History of Religions in North America: the State of the Art, *Religion* 1 (1975) 74.

28 This image is a source of concern to those nurtured in the academic study of religion, see for example C. R. Gaba, University Departments of Religious Studies in Africa: Seminary or University Institutions? Paper presented at a Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy seminar, University of Calabar, 16 February 1982. Mimeo.

29 The journals of the departments of religion of Ibadan (*Orita*) and Nsukka (*West African Religion*) have continued to appear, albeit sporadically, since the 1960s, and provide a forum for the work of both Nigerian and non-Nigerian scholars of religion, as well as a means of disseminating their research findings on an international scale. Incidentally, the journal, *West African Religion*, whose first editor was Andrew F. Walls, was the seed for the *Journal of Religion in Africa*. One of the early issues was seen by the then director of E. J. Brill, the late F. C. Wieder, who proposed an international journal on its basis. Personal communication from Andrew Walls, 16 June 1986.

30 See the special issue on Igbo religion (by Igbo scholars) of *Africana Marburgensia* **18**(2) (1985). Also the forthcoming issue of the same journal on Cross River Religion (Rosalind I. J. Hackett, guest editor).

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ASCENSION OR INVASION: IMPLICATIONS OF THE HEAVENLY JOURNEY IN ANCIENT JUDAISM

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The early Jewish myth of the heavenly ascension of a divinely approved hero (e.g. Moses) has, as its shadow, the myth of the heavenly invasion of a rebel against the divinity (e.g. Isaiah's Lucifer). In this paper, I demonstrate that the 'ascension myth' and the 'Lucifer myth' are positive and negative variants of the same story. I explore the possibility that this story may reflect the social world of its narrators. However, I find the ultimate source of its power in generational conflicts within individual families, perceived from opposite viewpoints, and projected into the heavens.

INTRODUCTION

I intend this paper[1] as a contribution toward understanding the significance of the belief in heavenly ascension, as we find it in Judaism in the early centuries of the Christian Era. I restrict the discussion to Jewish sources, although I believe that my observations can be extended to other religious systems of late antiquity, particularly Christianity.

The belief in ascension exists in two main variants. In one, the ascending figure is a hero, the narrator of the story sympathizes with his quest, and the audience is expected to rejoice at his triumph. In the other, the ascending figure is sinister and demonic, the narrator regards his quest as a threat to the divine order, and the audience is expected to rejoice at his fall.

The former, positive variant—which I will henceforth call the 'ascension myth' proper—occurs in several Jewish apocalypses, in the rabbinic legends of Moses' ascent, and in the *Hekhalot*. The latter, negative variant, finds its classic expression in the 14th chapter of Isaiah. I will refer to it as the 'Lucifer myth'.

Modern writers who treat the theme of ascension in ancient Judaism (Bousset, 1901; Widengren, 1950; Colpe, 1967; Culianu, 1983; Dean-Otting, 1984) normally consider only the positive variant. An exception is Alan F. Segal, who mentions the Lucifer myth, but gives it only incidental importance: Isaiah 14 is 'part of the polemic against Mesopotamian religion, with its concepts of ascension of the king on his enthronement' (1980: 1353). But the

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pre-Israelite antecedents of this negative variant (Grelot, 1956; McKay, 1970; Craigie, 1973; Wyatt, 1973–4; Hanson, 1977: 202–18), and its vigourous development in Judaism and particularly Christianity, suggest that it is more than a shadow of the positive ascension myth. Neither version can plausibly be explained as a parody of the other, nor can either be declared chronologically or logically prior. Both describe, with captivating power, essentially the same events. Only, what is black to one is white to the other.

I now propose that both myths are ultimately rooted in a struggle which has been played out in every human family since before the beginning of history: the generational conflict that ensues when a child begins to reach maturity, is about to finish his climb from the ground to the heights of the adult world, and grasps at the power that once belonged to the parent alone. This process may be seen as a glorious quest or as a damnable rebellion. The ascension myth reflects the former perception, the Lucifer myth the latter. Hence the profound appeal of both to the human imagination, generation after generation.

If this view is to be accepted, I must demonstrate that the ascension myth and the Lucifer myth are, at least in their Jewish manifestations, the positive and negative forms of the same story. I must then argue that this phenomenon is best explained by appeal to the psychology of the individuals who heard the stories, were moved and excited by them, and passed them on. These tasks I now undertake.

ISAIAH'S 'MORNING-STAR'

Isaiah 14: 12–15 runs as follows:

> [12] How have you fallen from heaven, Morning-star, son of the Dawn!
> You have been cut down to earth, you who cast lots [?] over the nations.
> [13] You said to yourself, 'I will climb to heaven,
> I will lift up my throne above the stars of God,
> I will sit on the mountain of meeting in the far reaches of the north.
> [14] I will climb upon the backs of the clouds, I will be like the Most High'.
> [15] In fact, you will be thrown down to She'ol, to the depths of the pit.

Although the context in Isaiah represents this taunt as directed against some king of Babylon, it is clear that there is more to it than that. Origen realized long ago that its terms do not suit Nebuchadnezzar or any other historical king of Babylon, and that this figure must be a screen for some supernatural being.[2] Modern scholars do not entirely agree on who this being and his antecedents are (Grelot, 1956; McKay, 1970; Craigie, 1973; Wyatt, 1973–4). But, whatever the myth's prehistory, it seems clear from the Isaiah passage that its Israelite version told of a stellar god who rebelled against the supreme deity and tried to displace him or at least share power with him, and who was punished by being hurled down 'to She'ol, to the depths of the pit' (Hanson, 1977: 207–8).

Later Jewish writers occasionally preserved the mythological undertone of this passage, which the Isaian context had done much to cloak.[3] Early Christianity brought this concealed message fully into the open. 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven', says Jesus in Luke 10:17, evidently alluding to Isaiah 14:12. Origen, and other Christian exegetes with him, developed coherently and clearly the equation of Isaiah's 'Morning-star' with the devil.[4] Small wonder that 'Lucifer', the Latin equivalent of 'Morning-star',[5] came to be a name for Satan.

Rabbinic exegesis, by and large, insisted that Isaiah's 'Morning-star' was a historical king of Babylon, specifically Nebuchadnezzar.[6] But the mythological themes underlying the prophecy, though submerged and forced out of sight, lost none of their power. They were, as we will see, at times attached to Nebuchadnezzar himself. They were also, more significantly, attached to the apparently positive figure of the ascending hero. We see them in some of the stranger details of the ascension of Moses.

RABBINIC EVIDENCE

Lucifer—I call the ancient rebel-god by his most familiar name—proposes to ascend to heaven, and presumably tries to do so. Moses, according to rabbinic legend, successfully ascends to heaven, as do several apocalyptic heroes, and those of the *Hekhalot*. But there, we might suppose, the resemblance ends. Lucifer approaches heaven as a hostile invader, his aim to seize divine power. Moses and the rest approach heaven as humble suppliants, their aim to receive Torah (Moses), learn God's secrets (the apocalyptists), or simply to 'see the King in his beauty' (the *Hekhalot*).

The rabbinic stories of Moses' ascent cast doubt on the reality of this distinction. The authors of these tales show the greatest audacity in reading heavenly ascent into Biblical texts such as Exodus 19:20 and 24:15–8; which, read without prejudice, plainly intend that Moses climbed no higher than the top of Mount Sinai.[7] They are hardly less audacious in the character they give Moses' feat. The fullest accounts of it, in *Pesiqta Rabbati* 20 and two closely parallel texts,[8] depict Moses as an invader who forces his way into the heavens through brutal aggression. His first encounter is with the angel Kemuel, who objects that a creature of filth like Moses cannot enter a place of purity. Moses stands his ground; and, when Kemuel does not let him pass, annihilates him with a single blow (*hikkahu mosheh peṣaʿ ʾehad weʾibbedo min haʿolam*).

In a similar vein, Aramaic hymns have Moses use his 'horns of splendour' (*qarne hoda*) to fight the angels (Heinemann, 1973: 364–5, 374). 'I will not descend', he taunts them, 'until I prove myself a hero, until I gore your bodies with my horns' (*beqarnay 'anaggaḥ*; Ginsburger, 1921: 15–6). Midrashic texts assume the same image when they speak of Moses fighting the angels like a goring ox (*keshor nogeaḥ*, Grözinger, 1976: 291; *menaggeaḥ 'otam, Ex. R.* 41:7). Looking back on all this mayhem, Moses can boast: 'I took part in the war of the angels and received a fiery Torah . . . . I vanquished the celestial retinue and revealed their secrets to humankind' (*Deut. R.* 11:10).

Why is Moses depicted as being so violent? We can best understand the behaviour the rabbis attributed to him by comparing it with the proposals they attributed to Isaiah's 'Day-star'; whom, as we have seen, they identified with Nebuchadnezzar. Thus, a 'Targumic Tosefta' to Ezekiel 1:1, drawing on Isaiah 14,[9] puts the following words into Nebuchadnezzar's mouth:

> 'Is this not Jerusalem, city of the most high God, which is said to have no equal from one end of the earth to the other? It is going to be handed over to me; I will destroy it and its Temple, and I will exile its people to the country of my idols. Then I will climb to the lofty heavens and will destroy the celestial chambers; I will make war with the exalted holy ones and will set my royal throne over the cherubim.' So it is written: *I will climb upon the backs of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.* (Wertheimer, 1968: 135–40).

Naturally enough, given the rabbis' preconceptions, the Lucifer myth is historicized. Yet, in the threat that 'I will make war [*'aggiaḥ qeraba*] with the exalted holy ones', we catch a glimpse of its original mythological character. What Lucifer/Nebuchadnezzar here promises to do, Moses actually does. Significantly, the root *ngḥ* is used of both: in Hebrew *nogeaḥ* and *menaggeaḥ*, in Aramaic *'anaggaḥ* and *'aggiaḥ* (*qeraba*).

Moses' mode of ascent, too, is parallel to that of Lucifer/Nebuchadnezzar. In *Pesiqta*, Moses meets a cloud which crouches beside him on the earth, ready for him to ride. 'The cloud opened its mouth and he went inside it; as it is written, *Moses went into the cloud* [Exodus 24:18], *and the cloud covered him* [24:16]. The cloud carried him upward'.

The passages quoted from Exodus do much to explain the origin of this elevator-cloud, but they do not fully account for it. Exodus 24:18 goes on to say that Moses *ascended to the mountain*, and, presumably, only to the mountain, when he *went into the cloud*. Why does the expositor ignore this sequel?

We may answer by raising the question of who else in rabbinic literature rides a cloud like Moses'. It is Nebuchadnezzar. So we learn from *Mekhilta*:

> Nebuchadnezzar said: 'I am going to make myself a little cloud and live inside it'. So it is written: *I will climb upon the backs of the clouds*, and so forth (*Shirah*, Chap. 6; Lauterbach, 1933, ed./trans., p. 46; parallel in tSot. 3:19).

We realize from this midrash that Exodus 24:18 will indeed suggest that the cloud is a vehicle for a heavenly ride—when it is read in the light of Isaiah 14:14. (The allusion to the *mountain of meeting* [*har moʿed*] in Isaiah 14:13 reinforces this link between the two passages; for, in Exodus 24:18, Moses goes up to the mountain to meet God.) By doing so, the author of the ascension story applies to Moses a verse properly associated with Nebuchadnezzar/Lucifer. He thus attests that the two figures are bound together.

Lucifer *will lift up my throne above the stars of God.* Moses, at the climax of his ascent, seizes God's throne. *Pesiqta* and its parallels, including bShabb. 88b, so understand Job 26:9: *When he seized the front of the throne,* (God) *spread over him the splendour of his cloud* (*me'aḥez pene kisseh parshez ʿalaw ʿanano*).

It is true that the rabbinic sources represent this 'seizure' as taking place with God's permission, indeed with his encouragement. Moses has fled to his throne for protection from the angels. But the gesture is ambiguous, and conveys a second message quite different from the one that is explicitly attributed to it. 'Seizing the front of God's throne' can be read as an aggressive action, a prelude to displacing the one sitting on the throne (cf. Schultz, 1971: 289–90). We will come back to this point.

Lucifer is *thrown down to She'ol.* This is perhaps linked to the response that *Pesiqta* twice attributes to Moses: he is so frightened of the angels that he wants to fall from his cloud. Yet it is not Moses who is sent down to earth, but the angels themselves. So *Pesiqta*'s conclusion: God 'sent twelve hundred thousand ministering angels down to earth' to help the Israelites endure his revelation.[10] Passages from Origen, apparently based on Jewish ascension tales like that of *Pesiqta* (Halperin, 1981), similarly connect the ascent of the hero with a descent of angels.

In the light of evidence we will presently consider, we may wonder if the two movements are in some significant relation, the human's exaltation bound up with the angels' degradation. This is perhaps the deeper meaning of Moses' eagerness to grasp the Torah, and the angels' corresponding eagerness to retain it. By getting the Torah, Moses will take the angels' place, send them down from their position of power and take it for himself. *I will lift up my throne above the stars of God . . . I will be like the Most High.*

HELLENISTIC JEWISH EVIDENCE

The rabbinic belief in Moses' heavenly ascension is, as Wayne Meeks (1967) has shown, rooted in pre-rabbinic tradition. Philo seems to allude to some such belief when he comments, on Exodus 24:12, that 'a holy soul is divinized by ascending not to the air or to the ether or to heaven (which is) higher than all but to (a region) above the heavens. And beyond the world there is no place but God' (*Questions and Answers on Exodus*, II, 40; Marcus, trans., 1953: 82–3). Josephus seems to have known traditions of this sort but to have tried, with imperfect success, to suppress them (Meeks, p. 141). Significantly, Josephus describes Moses' final departure from the world by saying that 'a cloud of a sudden descended upon him and he disappeared in a ravine' (*Antiquities*, IV, 326; Thackeray, trans., 1967: 633). This cloud, to be found nowhere in Deuteronomy 34, is perhaps the cloud of Exodus 24:18; Josephus' source, we may imagine, understood it much as the rabbis did, and transferred it from Moses' preliminary visit to heaven to his final journey there.[11]

Josephus thus tries to conceal the heavenly ascent, Philo to spiritualize it. It is not surprising that neither finds a place for the aggressive, rebellious features we have seen in the rabbinic form of the tradition. We cannot, of course, be sure that Philo or Josephus even knew these features. But that they might have known them, that the belief in Moses' ascension had taken on a revolutionary cast well before the time of the rabbis, appears from a remarkable dream attributed to Moses in the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian (Alexandria, 2nd century B.C.?):

> I had a vision of a great throne on the top of mount Sinai
> and it reached till the folds of heaven.
> A noble man was sitting on it,
> with a crown and a large sceptre in his
> left hand. He beckoned to me with his right hand,
> so I approached and stood before the throne.
> He gave me the sceptre and instructed me to sit
> on the great throne. Then he gave me the royal crown
> and got up from the throne.
> I beheld the whole earth all around and saw
> beneath the earth and above the heavens.
> A multitude of stars fell before my knees
> and I counted them all.
> They paraded past me like a battalion of men.
> Then I awoke from my sleep in fear.
> (Lines 68–82; Jacobson, trans., 1983: 54–5, 89–97.)

Moses here completes the action adumbrated in the rabbinic sources, of seizing and making himself master of God's throne. The stars fall at his feet. *I will lift up my throne above the stars of God.*

APOCALYPTIC EVIDENCE

Heavenly ascensions and otherworldly journeys are a common feature of Jewish apocalypses (Collins, 1979). It is not easy to generalize about the purpose served by these travels. In many cases, one gets the impression that the purpose of the journey is essentially instrumental: the seer is shown the celestial or infernal realms, so that he can witness with his own eyes the hidden realities he will then communicate. So, for example, the tours of the several heavens described in *3 Baruch* and *2 Enoch*; or the 'tours of hell' discussed by Martha Himmelfarb (1983).

In other texts, however, the necessity for the journey is not so clear. In the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (ca. 100 A.D.?), Abraham is promised revelation of 'guarded things . . . the things which were made by the ages and by my word . . . what will come upon those who have done evil and just things in the race of man' (9:6, 9–10; Rubinkiewicz, trans., in Charlesworth, 1983: 693). After a heavenly ascent (Chaps 15–18), he converses with God, who grants him the promised revelations (Chaps 19–32). But he learns little that could not have been communicated easily enough without the prior ascent.[12] This consideration will lead us to suspect that Abraham's ascension is something more than a preliminary to revelation; that the feat has some significance of its own.

What this significance is appears from Abraham's encounter with the wicked angel 'Azazel'. As he prepares for his ascent, Azazel appears to him in the form of 'an unclean bird', and tries to frighten him into desisting:

> 'What are you doing, Abraham, on the holy heights, where no one eats or drinks, nor is there upon them food for men. But these all will be consumed by fire and they will burn you up. Leave the man who is with you and flee! For if you ascend to the height, they will destroy you' (13:4–5; Rubinkiewicz, trans., in Charlesworth, 1983: 695).

Abraham's ascent, as the apocalypse describes it, is in several respects parallel to and probably modelled after that of Moses.[13] The rabbinic Moses traditions make clear that Azazel's warnings are by no means unfounded. Moses indeed found that there is no food or drink on the 'holy heights'—although he also found that God's presence is itself nourishment enough.[14] We need only think of the angels' murderous attacks on Moses[15] to realize the truth of Azazel's claim that the heavenly beings 'will burn you up . . . if you ascend to the height, they will destroy you'.

But why is Azazel so anxious to intimidate Abraham? The rebuke he gets from Abraham's companion angel provides the clue:

> 'Shame on you, Azazel! For Abraham's portion is in heaven, and yours is on earth, for you have selected here, (and) become enamored of the dwelling place of your blemish. Therefore the Eternal Ruler, the Mighty One, has given you a dwelling on earth . . . For behold, the garment which in heaven was formerly yours has been set aside for him, and the corruption which was on him has gone over to you' (13:7–8, 14).

Abraham's ascension, it appears, is a tangible representation of his exaltation, which will happen at the expense of an angelic being. That is why Abraham must make his ascent, and why Azazel wants to stop him.

This pattern is detectable in older apocalyptic sources. In the Enochian 'Book of Watchers' (ca. 200 B.C.), Enoch ascends to the divine throne in order to intercede for the fallen angels (*1 Enoch*, Chaps 12–16). Unlike Enoch's subsequent travels to the extremities of the earth (Chaps 17–36), which are connected only very loosely to what precedes them, his ascent to the throne is without any obvious purpose; for he could have prayed for the angels, and heard God's condemnation of them (Chaps 15–16), while remaining on earth. But Enoch's act of ascending is parallel and opposite to the descent of the angels;[16] and it is perhaps in this opposition that its significance lies.

In the Adam legends that have been preserved in Greek, God promises Adam that 'your seducer'—apparently entrenched in heaven—'shall be cast into this place, so that you might sit above him. Then he himself and those who listen to him shall be condemned, and they shall greatly mourn and weep when they see you sitting on his glorious throne'.[17]

But it is the *Apocalypse of Abraham* that most clearly expresses the relation between the human's ascent and the angel's fall. The evident kinship of this source to the rabbinic stories of Moses' ascension suggests that we may infer from Azazel's motives the deeper motives of Moses' angelic opponents. Torah is a mark of their superior position, which they fear to lose to the ascending human.

True, it is only the lower echelons of heaven that the ascending hero threatens to displace. God himself is enthroned above the struggle; indeed, the hero is there by his invitation and under his protection. This point, at least, still seems to distinguish the ascension myth from the Lucifer myth. Yet Moses' gesture of seizing the divine throne (*Pesiqta* and parallels), and his feat of actually occupying it (Ezekiel the Tragedian), imply that even this distinction is less solid than it appears. The hero's ultimate ambition, repressed in most versions of the ascension myth, is indeed to *be like the Most High*. That this ambition can be achieved, we learn from the *Hekhalot*.

HEKHALOT EVIDENCE

A self-contained *Hekhalot* passage, its original context uncertain, has a divine voice announce the following to R. Akiba:

> 'I made him great, I took him, I appointed him—that is, Enoch son of Jared, whose name is Metatron. I lifted him up from the human race and made for him a throne opposite mine, which measured four hundred million parasangs of fire . . . I set him in charge of all the heavenly retinue and all the earthly retinue . . . I gave him the name "Lesser Lord" . . . I gave him more wisdom and understanding than any of the angels, and made him greater than all of them' (Schäfer, 1981: Nos 295, 405; Odeberg, 1973: Chap. 48C).

The early chapters of the *Hekhalot* text conventionally dubbed '*3 Enoch*' represent Metatron as describing to R. Ishmael how he was elevated and transformed from the human Enoch into a super-angelic being, actually called 'Lesser Yahweh'. This conception, of Enoch's ascension, transformation and near-divinization, can be traced back into the older Enoch literature. It is present, in far more modest form, in *1 Enoch* 71:11–6. Enoch is there carried to the heavens, and he adores the 'Head of Days' (that is, God; the language is drawn from Daniel 7:9). He then finds his spirit transformed, and himself addressed as the Messianic 'Son of Man who was born to righteousness'.[18] We can hardly doubt that there was some continuity of tradition from the early Enochian pseudepigrapha to the *Hekhalot*. But the author of *3 Enoch* has also drawn on the rabbinic traditions of Moses' ascent, and his divinized Enoch-Metatron has absorbed some of Moses' features.

Thus, Metatron tells R. Ishmael how God made for him

> 'a throne like the throne of glory, and he spread over me a curtain of splendour [*paraś ʿalay paraś shel ziw*], of radiance and glory and beauty and grace and favour. It was like the curtain [*paraś*] of the throne of glory, into which had been sewn all the kinds of splendour [*ziw*] of the world's luminaries.
>
> 'He placed it at the gate of the seventh palace and seated me on it. A herald went through all the heavens, proclaiming: "I have made my servant Metatron prince and ruler over all the princes of my kingdom, and over all the heavenly beings, with the exception of eight particularly honoured princes who are called Yahweh, by the name of their king . . ." ' (Schäfer, 1981: No. 3; Odeberg, 1973 Chap. 10).

The rabbis, we recall, applied Job 26:9 to Moses' seizure of God's throne: *me'aḥez pene kisseh parshez ʿalaw ʿanano*. They analyzed the mysterious *parshez* into *pereś shadday ziw*, 'the Almighty spread splendour'.[19] Metatron's words in *3 Enoch, paraś ʿalay paraś shel ziw*, plainly echo this midrash. Only by supposing that the detail has been transferred from the Moses stories can we explain why the curtain is spread, incongruously, *over* Metatron.

Other *Hekhalot* passages reinforce this link between Moses and Metatron. One text has Metatron reveal Torah to Moses at Sinai. The angels complain; and Metatron, like Moses, needs God to defend his right to be among the heavenly beings (Schäfer, 1981: 76–80; Odeberg, 1973: Chap. 48D). As Kemuel charges Moses with impurity (*Pesiqta*), so the angels charge the ascending Enoch/Metatron with his human smell (Schäfer, 1981: No. 9; Odeberg, 1973: Chap. 6). Finally, we have a strange passage, its original context uncertain, which speaks of Metatron as 'youth'[20] (or 'prince') and brings him into special connection with Moses. 'He was not given [*lo' nittan*] to Adam, nor to Shem, nor to Abraham, nor to Isaac, nor to Jacob, but only to Moses' (Schäfer, 1981: No. 396; cf. Cohen, 1983: 235–8). The use of *nittan* seems to imply that Moses received something of the 'youth's' essence, binding him to this being in a way that went beyond anything the patriarchs had known.

I would define the relation of the two figures as follows: as Metatron is a 'Lesser Yahweh', so he is a greater Moses. Moses ascends to heaven; Metatron becomes ruler of heaven. Moses defeats the angels; Metatron dominates them. Moses grasps God's throne; Metatron sits on a throne identical to it. When Metatron grants revelation to Moses, he is giving a helping hand to his junior alter ego.

Metatron is Moses cast more openly in the role of Lucifer. Should we wish to compress Metatron's achievement into a single sentence, we could not do better than put Lucifer's project into the past tense. *I have climbed to heaven, I have lifted up my throne above the stars of God . . . I have climbed upon the backs of the clouds, I have become like the Most High.*

INTERPRETATIONS

To sum up: the ascending hero, in all of his avatars—Enoch, Abraham, Moses and Enoch-Metatron—is Lucifer, viewed this time in a positive light and permitted to triumph. Lucifer is *thrown down to She'ol, to the depths of the pit.* Moses vanquishes the angels and grasps the throne of God. Metatron carries Moses' success to a degree that matches Lucifer's fantasies.

How shall we understand this material? One option would be to treat the myths we have considered as reflections of the social realities known to their authors. Suter (1979) and Nickelsburg (1981) have seen in the defiled angels of *1 Enoch* mythical reflections of the defiled priests of the Second Temple. Along these lines, we might imagine that the figure of Enoch bears the hopes of certain disaffected Jews who themselves hankered for the status of Temple priesthood. In their fantasy, the high and mighty sinners (the angels) are cast down from God's presence, while saintly humble folk (the human Enoch) are elevated to it.

Certain features of the *Hekhalot* literature encourage this approach. While the *Hekhalot* are normally conceived as manuals for ecstatic journeys to the heavenly realms (Scholem, 1954: 40–79; 1965), they in fact devote nearly as much attention to a seemingly distinct issue: how one may master Torah without difficulty and without forgetfulness (Halperin, 1984; cf. Dan, 1984: 24–31). This is the concern of the *Hekhalot* sub-genre known as *Śar Torah* ('prince of Torah'), which includes magical recipes for this mastery, along with testimonials to the effectiveness of the magic and a story which serves as a legitimating myth for it.

From the testimonials, we learn that young R. Ishmael could not remember any Torah he learned, until his teacher adjured him 'by the great seal and the great oath', and 'revealed a method, the secret of Torah' (Schäfer, 1981: No. 279).

We learn that Ishmael used this method with 'a certain stupid fellow, and he became just like me. Shepherds used it, and they became like me . . . The multitudes, who had never studied Bible or Mishnah, used it and became like scholars' (No. 305). We learn that God assured R. Akiba, who had travelled to the throne to consult him about the effectiveness of *Śar Torah* magic, that through it 'I will attend even to someone who has just this moment converted to Judaism . . . for much learning of Torah' (Nos 685–6). We may infer that *Śar Torah*'s appeal was to the underdog elements of rabbi-dominated Jewish society, who accepted the rabbis' view that possession of Torah was the path to status, but who had no way to gain possession of it except magic.[21]

The legitimating myth of *Śar Torah* promises these 'humble folk' that they will 'be exalted in the Torah's exaltation', to a lofty social status (Schäfer, 1981: Nos 303, 304, 287–291). It tells them that their path to this 'exaltation' is blocked by angels, who bitterly protest to God that he must not reveal the secret of Torah to the ordinary Jews, lest 'the small be like the great, the fool like the wise man' (No. 292). It is not hard to see the opponents of these 'humble folk' as their social betters (that is, the rabbis), who have got hold of the instrument of status and want to keep it for themselves.

Now, I have argued in detail that the *Śar Torah* myth, with its conflict with the angels over the Torah, is modelled after the older rabbinic tales of Moses' ascent and struggle with the angels (Halperin, 1987*a*; cf. Idel, 1981: 23–33). Indeed, the *Hekhalot* literature, with its dual emphasis on heavenly ascent and acquisition of Torah, seems to me to make sense as an effort by low-status Jews to actualize the ascension myth as it was communicated to them in the Moses stories. The act of ascension mirrors their hankering for higher social status; the hostile angels they imagined waiting for them mirror the rabbinic elite who they supposed blocked their quest for this status.[22]

The hypothesis I have just sketched will explain the powerful attraction the ascension myth had for the *Hekhalot* writers. The suggestions of Suter and Nickelsburg (above) may explain, along similar lines, the myth's appeal to the author of the 'Book of Watchers'. If we suppose that the Lucifer myth was the unacknowledged shadow of the ascension myth, we may surely imagine that Lucifer's revolutionary qualities added to its attractiveness.

But we cannot stop here. We may well suppose that certain groups in Jewish society harnessed the energies of the ascension myth to their socially defined ambitions and resentments; we do not thereby resolve the question of the ultimate source of these energies. To answer this question, we must explore the myth's appeal to the believer, not as a member of some social category, but as a human individual. We will then grasp what has so far eluded us: why the ascension myth and the Lucifer myth are so closely bound together; and why they seem persistently to crop up in sources that may be separated from each other by centuries.

I propose that both myths reflect what Ernest Jones has called 'the world-old conflict between father and son, between the younger and the older generation, the favourite theme of so many poets and writers, the central *motif* of most mythologies and religions' (1949: 75–6). The ascension myth reflects the viewpoint of the generation rising to power, the Lucifer myth that of the generation entrenched in power. (The 'rising' of the younger generation occurs quite literally, in the physical growth of the child.) Most adults will have experienced this conflict from both sides. In most hearers or readers of the stories, therefore, will be found something that responds, certainly to the positive form of the myth, probably to its negative as well. Like the struggle itself, the myth renews itself endlessly.

This proposal accords with Erik Erikson's observation that preadolescent boys tend to express concern with their maturation by making high towers of building blocks, then representing the towers collapsing or boys falling from them (1955; 1963: 97–108). It runs parallel to Philip Slater's interpretation of the themes of flight and falling in Greek mythology, as expressions of the son's competition with his father and his fear of being destroyed in this competition (1968: 395–6).

We must judge it, like any hypothesis, by the advantages it offers in accounting for our data. These seem to me several. For one thing, as I have already remarked, it will explain the connections that evidently exist among sources widely separated in time: Isaiah 14, the Enochian 'Book of Watchers', Ezekiel the Tragedian, the *Apocalypse of Abraham, Pesiqta Rabbati*, and the *Hekhalot*. No doubt, there may have been a continuing stream of tradition that connected at least some of these sources with others. We may have to invoke such a tradition to explain the continuity of certain specific details (such as the transformation of Enoch). But it no longer has to bear the heavy burden of accounting for all the parallels. If people separated from each other by centuries tell what is essentially the same story, this is because the story emerges from and answers to an unchanging reality of human life.

As I have indicated, a hypothesis of social conflict will explain certain specific features of the *Hekhalot*. Others, however, seem to reflect the inner wishes and anxieties of the *Hekhalot* authors and their audiences, and these are best accounted for along the lines I have now proposed. Thus, when the *Hekhalot* writers depict the denizens of the heavens as gigantic, this is because they imagine themselves as children wandering through a world of enormous adults. When *Hekhalot Rabbati*, as I have argued elsewhere (Halperin, 1987*b*), represents the eyes of the *ḥayyot* (Ezekiel's 'living creatures') as enormous female genitals which terrify the *merkabah* traveller with their gaze, this is because the author sees himself as a little boy caught in a bewildering and overwhelming world of adult sexuality.

Finally, my hypothesis will resolve a particularly thorny puzzle connected with Metatron. This is his mysterious title *naᶜar*, 'youth'. Scholem's suggestion (1965: 50),[23] that *naᶜar* is to be understood as 'servant' rather than 'youth', is not entirely satisfying. For, if the *Hekhalot* writers had wanted to convey only that Metatron is God's servant, why did they not use some less ambivalent word (*ᶜebed, mesharet*)? Their choice of a word that normally means 'youth' requires further explanation.

Metatron, as we have seen, is a human being who successfully enters the frightening and impressive world of the heavens. He finds his body transformed in accord with its realities. He takes his place among—indeed, above—the beings who once so intimidated him. This achievement is precisely that of the adolescent, the *naᶜar*, projected onto the heavens. When the *Hekhalot* writers give him this title, they brilliantly communicate who he originally was.

CHRISTIAN PARALLELS?

I have so far restricted my investigation to Jewish sources. But the conflict which I see as the ultimate origin of the ascension and Lucifer myths is universal, and it would be surprising indeed if no phenomena parallel to those I have examined here were to appear in the texts of other religions. I tentatively propose a few possible parallels from early Christianity.

Robert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh (1981) have argued that the essential claim of 4th-century Arianism was that Christ was a creature of God's whom God promoted to divinity, and that humans may strive for a comparable promotion. If Gregg and Groh are right—and I am hardly competent to judge this issue—the Arian Christ turns out to resemble the Metatron of the *Hekhalot*. This parallel does not seem to me to argue for Jewish influence on Arianism, but rather for common psychological roots for Arian Christianity and *Hekhalot* Judaism.

A century earlier, Origen seems to presuppose a myth of celestial invasion akin to the Jewish ascension myth. Several passages of his *Homilies* on Numbers and Joshua seem to interpret Joshua's wars against the Canaanites as shadowy reflections of greater celestial struggles, in which humans challenge and expel hostile powers entrenched in the heavens.[24] Drawing on an older Christian tradition that identified the *Lord powerful and mighty in battle* (Psalm 24:8) as the ascending Christ, Origen connects the ascension with Christ's 'valourous feats against the hostile forces' (*Commentary on John*, VI, 287–94; cf. Daniélou, 1957: 37–40). Origen's elaboration of this last point, I have argued, reflects direct influence of the rabbinic stories of Moses' ascension (Halperin, 1981). But it is possible that Origen was open to this influence because he found cognate conceptions in his own background.

My colleagues, Professors John H. Schütz and John Van Seters, have independently suggested to me that Philippians 2:6–8 may represent a reaction against traditions of Moses seizing the divine throne: Jesus, 'though he was in the form of God, *did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped*, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant . . . and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross'. But, if some New Testament passages react against the Jewish ascension myth, others seem to share its values. The Jesus of the Book of Revelation, like Metatron, achieves a divine throne and helps others to a similar achievement. 'He who conquers', he announces at the climax of his messages to the seven churches, 'I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne' (Revelation 3:21).[25]

This last passage oddly resembles II Thessalonians 2:3–4. Here the author (who may or may not be Paul) speaks of 'the rebellion', of 'the man of lawlessness . . . the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God'. The resemblance points to a parallel between Christ's achievement and that of Antichrist (as Christian tradition was to call the 'son of perdition')—a parallel which takes on fresh significance in the light of what we have seen of the Lucifer myth's relation to the ascension myth.

Other Christian sources on Antichrist (collected by Wilhelm Bousset, 1896) allow us to develop this parallel. Bousset quotes a homily transmitted in the name of Hippolytus, which attributes to Antichrist an ascension resembling Christ's. 'For his demons he shall represent as angels of light, and hosts of bodiless [spirits] he shall lead forth . . . and before the face of all he exhibits him received into heaven with trumpets and shouts and great cries hailing him with unutterable hymns . . .' (pp. 146–7). The difference is that Antichrist is ultimately cast down. Bousset summarizes: 'The Antichrist perishes in the attempt to fly aloft and thus prove himself God, and by God is hurled down' (p. 149, cf. p. 156).

Early Christian writers were aware of, and indeed stressed, the parallels between Christ and Antichrist. 'For the deceiver seeks to liken himself in all things to the Son of God. Christ is a lion, so Antichrist is also a lion; Christ is a king, so Antichrist is also a king', and so on (Hippolytus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*, Chap. 6; Salmond, trans., 1888: 206). 'He will cause the lame to walk . . . the deaf to hear . . . the dumb to speak . . . the blind to see. The lepers he will cleanse. The ill he will heal. The demons he will cast out . . . He will do the works which the Christ did, except for raising the dead alone' (*Apocalypse of Elijah*, 3:9–12).[26]

Bousset refers to this parallelism between Christ and Antichrist as 'the law of contrasts' (1896: 25). But giving the phenomenon a name is not the same as explaining it. Hippolytus, naturally enough, supposed that the demonic mimics the divine. In the light of our present study, we may suspect that the 'law of contrasts' has deeper roots. Christ and Antichrist share the same features and do (nearly) the same things because, at bottom, they are the same. The ascending and triumphant hero, and the ascending and near-triumphant rebel, reflect the same psychic reality, viewed from two different perspectives. This I have argued for ancient Judaism; I now propose it, with all due tentativeness, for ancient Christianity as well.

NOTES

1 Presented originally at a session of the Society for Biblical Literature, Chicago, 10 December, 1984. I am grateful to the American editorial board for their suggestions.

2 *De Principiis*, I.v.4–5, IV.iii.9 (Butterworth (trans.), 1973); *Homiliae in Ezechielem*, XII, 1–2 (Baehrens, 1925, ed.).

3 *Vita Adae et Evae*, Chap. 15 (Johnson, trans., in Charlesworth, 1985, p. 262); and perhaps *Sibylline Oracles* 5:512–31 (Collins, (trans.), in Charlesworth (ed.), 1983, p. 405).

4 Origen (above, note 2); Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, V.xi (Evans, (ed./trans.) 1972: 582–3); Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Second Homily* (Salmond (trans.), 1871: 134); Cassian, *Conferences*, VIII.vii (Gibson, (trans.), 1894: 378); Jerome, *Letter XXII*, 4 (Fremantle, Lewis, Martley (trans.), 1893: 23–4), *Commentary* on Isaiah 14:12–5 (Adriaen, 1963, ed., pp. 240–3). A few writers equate the 'Morning-star' with Antichrist: Hippolytus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*, ch. 17 (Salmond, 1888, trans., pp. 207–8); Cyprian, *Epistle 54*, 3 (Wallis (trans.), 1868: 162). My student, Bert Harrill, collected most of these references, as well as those recorded in note 3. My research assistant, Robert B. Spencer, helped me check them.

5 Vulg. Isaiah 14:12, *Lucifer qui mane oriebaris*; based on LXX *ho heōsphoros ho prōi anatellōn*. 'Light-bringer' (Greek *phōsphoros*, Latin *lucifer*) and 'dawn-bringer' (Greek *heōsphoros*) are common designations for the planet Venus as morning star.

6 References in Hyman (1979), to Isaiah 14:12–5. One exceptional midrash applies 14:12a to the heavenly patron of Babylon, whose fall must precede that of Nebuchadnezzar himself (v 12b): *Mekhilta, Shirah*, Chap. 2 (Lauterbach (ed./trans.), 1933: 20); *Song R.* 8:12, Tanh. *Be-Shallaḥ*, No. 13.

7 The second-century R. Jose appears in rabbinic sources as a lonely skeptic: 'Moses and Elijah never went up to heaven, nor did the Glory come down to earth, but rather . . . God said to Moses, I will call you from the top of the mountain, and you come up' (*Mekhilta, Ba-Ḥodesh* ch. 4; Lauterbach (ed./trans.), 1933: 224; parallel in bSukk. 5a).

8 The parallels are in an Oxford manuscript (Bodl. Or. 135) published by Karl-Erich Grözinger (1976: 291–5); and a brief text called *Maʿayan Ḥokhmah*, published by Adolf Jellinek (1967: 58–61). I have followed Grözinger's critical text of *Pesiqta Rabbati* 20 (pp. 296–306). (William G. Braude's English translation [1968] follows the older edition of Meir Friedmann, and therefore differs slightly from mine.) These narratives may perhaps be late in their present formulation; I have argued that, in their essentials, they go back to the syna-

gogues of 3rd-century Palestine (Halperin, 1981, 1987*a*: Chap. VIII). More distant parallels occur in bShabb 88b–89a; *Midrash ha-Gadol* to Exodus 19:20 (Margulies, 1976, ed., pp. 395–6); *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer*, Chap. 46. The passages are discussed by Meeks (1967: 205–11), Schultz (1971), Schäfer (1975: 119–39), Grözinger (1976), and myself (works cited above).

9 On the 'Targumic Toseftas', see Kasher (1973, 1975–6). The 'Tosefta' quoted here obviously draws on a baraita, expounding Isaiah 14:14–5, which bHag. 13a and Pes. 94a–b attribute to Johanan b. Zakkai. (This attribution is probably false; see Halperin, 1980: 166). There is no solid evidence for dating this 'Tosefta'. Its depiction of Nebuchadnezzar, however, is particularly plausible when viewed against the policy of the Christian Roman emperors to build up Palestine as Christian Holy Land and Jerusalem as a showcase for Christianity's triumph, and consequently to leave the Temple Mount a desolation (Avi-Yonah, 1976: 161–6, 223–5).

10 Parallels in bShabb. 88a, b; *Mekhilta, Ba-Ḥodesh*, Chap. 9 (Lauterbach (ed./trans.), 1933: 269–70).

11 The parallelism of the two episodes is explicit in a midrash, quoted in *Sifre Deut.*, No. 357, and bSot. 13b, which links Deuteronomy 34:5 to Exodus 34:28, and infers that Moses did not die but ascended again to God (Haacker and Schäfer, 1974: 170–3). Admittedly, it is also possible to explain Josephus' cloud by supposing that he was influenced by Roman traditions on the death of Romulus (Haacker and Schäfer, 1974: 149–150; Talbert, 1975: 423–5). The cloud again appears in Samaritan traditions of Moses' death, and is perhaps presupposed in Mark 9:2–8, Revelation 11:1–13, cf. Acts 1:9 (Haacker and Schäfer, 1974: 162–163, 171n).

12 It is true that Abraham is shown a 'picture of creation' in Chaps 21–9, and that this picture provokes most of the questions he subsequently asks God. But the picture remains static before Abraham's eyes, like a motion-picture screen; he does not journey through it, as do the seers in *3 Baruch* and *2 Enoch*. It could easily have been shown to him in a dream-vision, like those of *1 Enoch* Chaps 83–90 or *2 Baruch* Chaps 53–74. He need not have ascended to heaven in order to see it.

13 The place from which Abraham ascends is 'God's mountain, glorious Horeb' (*Ap. Abr.* 12:3). He prepares for his experience with a 40-day fast (9:7), recalling Moses' 40-day abstention on the mountain (Exodus 34:28, Deuteronomy 9:9, 18). The angel tells Abraham: 'He whom you will see coming directly toward us in a great sound of sanctification is the Eternal One who has loved you. You will not look at him himself' (*Ap. Abr.* 16:3). Similarly, God 'passes by' Moses, but 'my face shall not be seen' (Exodus 33:21–3). When God passes, Moses 'bowed down to the earth and prostrated himself' (Exodus 34:8), which explains Abraham's frustrated urge to do the same thing (*Ap. Abr.* 17:3–5). The hymn that Abraham then chants (17:8–21) is plainly modelled after Moses' utterance in Exodus 34:6. Finally, the author of the apocalypse evidently identifies the 'smoking oven and torch of fire' that Abraham sees in Genesis 15:17, with Sinai at the time of the revelation, which Exodus (19:18, 20:15) and Deuteronomy (5:20) describe in similar language. (Some rabbis also made this identification: *Mekhilta, BaḤodesh*, Chap. 9, Lauterbach (ed./trans.), 1933: 268; *Gen. R.* 44:21, Theodor and Albeck (eds), 1965: 443; parallels cited by Theodor.) This will explain the odd detail that 'the angels who had the divided portions of the sacrifice ascended from the top of the furnace of smoke' (*Ap.*

Abr. 15:1). These are the angels who, in the rabbinic tradition, attend the lawgiving at Sinai. Like cinders, they rise to heaven in Sinai's smoke; for is it not written, *the mountain was burning with fire to the heart of heaven* (Deuteronomy 4:11)?

14 *Lev. R.* 20:10, Margulies (ed.), 1972: 465–6; *Pesiqta deRab Kahana* 26:9, Mandelbaum (ed.), 1962: 396; parallels cited by Margulies and Mandelbaum. The utterances attributed to Hoshaiah and Johanan evidently constitute an earlier source, utilized by the editor of this passage (and introduced, as in *Lev. R.*, by *de'amar rabbi hoshaᶜya*); which, unlike the context in which it is embedded, did not disapprove of 'feasting one's eyes on the Shechinah'. Cf. *Ap. Abr.* 12:2: 'And I ate no bread and drank no water, because (my) food was to see the angel who was with me, and his discourse with me was my drink'. Philo and Josephus also knew this detail (Meeks, 1967: 123, 141).

15 *Pesiqta Rabbati* 20 and parallels; *Ex. R.* 42:4.

16 God's speech to Enoch explicitly contrasts him with the angels: 'And go, say to the Watchers of heaven who sent you to petition on their behalf: "You ought to petition on behalf of men, not men on behalf of you. Why have you left the high, holy and eternal heaven, and lain with the women and become unclean with the daughters of men . . . ?"' (15:2; Knibb (trans.), 1978: 100).

17 '*Apocalypse of Moses*', Chap. 39 (Johnson (trans.), in Charlesworth (ed.), 1985: 291).

18 Knibb (trans.), 1978: 166. Knibb's translation is preferable to that of R. H. Charles (1913: Vol. II, p. 237), who, disliking the implication that Enoch had become the son of man, arbitrarily altered the text. The date of the Enochian 'Book of Parables', to which Chap. 71 belongs, has recently been a matter of some controversy (Milik and Black, 1976: 89–98; Greenfield and Stone, 1977; Knibb, 1979; Mearns, 1979; VanderKam, 1982). No one, I think, will deny that it is earlier than *3 Enoch*.

19 bShabb. 88b: '*When he seized the front of the throne*, [God] *spread over him the splendour of his cloud* . . . This teaches that the Almighty spread over him some of the splendour of his Shechinah and his cloud' (*melammed shepperes̆ shadday mizziw shekhinato waᶜanano ᶜalaw*).

20 The *Hekhalot* commonly apply this term to Metatron; see below.

21 It is tempting to identify these people with the *ᶜam ha-areṣ*, 'ignorant folk', whom the rabbis mention with much contempt and some fear (Oppenheimer, 1977; see, e.g., bPes. 49a–b).

22 Elaine Pagels has proposed a parallel interpretation of the demiurge and archons of Gnostic myth (1976; 1979: 28–47; pointed out to me by Professor Herbert Basser).

23 Followed by Greenfield, in Odeberg, 1973: XXXI.

24 *Homilies on Numbers*, VII, 5–6; XVI, 6; cf. XXVIII, 1–3. *Homilies on Joshua*, I, 5–6; XII, 1–2; cf. XXIII, 4; XXV, 4. (Cf. Jaubert, 1960: 63–7.) The fact that 'Jesus' is the Greek form of 'Joshua' naturally encouraged this interpretation of Joshua's conquests.

25 Cf. I Corinthians 15:24–28. If we suppose that 'every rule and every authority and power' (*pasan archēn kai pasan exousian kai dynamin*, verse 24) are supernatural forces opposed to Christ, and further suppose that Colossians 2:15 describes the ascending Christ's triumph over these *archai* and *exousiai*, we will have Pauline evidence for an ascension myth akin to that of the rabbinic Moses traditions. (Origen certainly so understood Colossians 2:15; see his

Commentary on John, VI, 285.) But Wesley Carr (1981) has cast very serious doubt on this interpretation of the Pauline texts.

26 Wintermute (trans.), in Charlesworth, 1983: 745. Other Christian sources, however, acknowledge that Antichrist can raise the dead (Bousset, 1896: 175–179). The Muslim Antichrist tradition singles out this power for special attention (*Ṣahiḥ Muslim, Kitab al-Fitan*; Siddiqi (trans.), 1975: 1516–1519). The *Apocalypse of Elijah*'s emphatic denial of it may therefore indirectly attest its importance.

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MAIMONIDES, IMAGINATION AND THE OBJECTIVITY OF PROPHECY*

Oliver Leaman

In linking prophecy so closely to imagination, Maimonides is frequently understood to be undermining the objectivity of prophecy. He is critical of the literal truth of prophetic accounts, and tends to regard prophecy as a natural phenomenon, related to dreaming. Through a discussion of his use of Aristotle's concept of *phantasia* it can be seen that he tries to hold on to both the objectivity of prophecy and its imaginative nature. He manages to do this by stressing the objectivity of the logical relationship between the prophetic image and the point it is designed to make.

The notion of imagination in the work of Moses Maimonides is difficult to pin down, and yet is crucial in any evaluation of his theory of prophecy and the literal truth of scripture. Maimonides has often been interpreted as having argued that prophecy is merely an internal psychological process, like having a dream, where the question of a corresponding external reality does not arise.[1] He does indeed claim that the difference between a dream and a prophecy is only a matter of degree, and suggests that wherever angels are mentioned in the Bible what is meant is really a description of an imaginative experience, rather than an historical event. This thesis presented by Maimonides was vigorously attacked by many different people on varying grounds, but the main lines of opposition are two, and are shared by both Jewish and Christian thinkers.[2] They question the linking of something as significant as prophecy in their religions to dreams (or even to the presence of angels) and they are concerned about the apparently open cheque which Maimonides provides for the transformation of literal biblical texts describing historical events into something else and far more nebulous. Is it true, then, that Maimonides' account of prophecy is a radical departure from religious and philosophical orthodoxy with respect to scriptural analysis, and what is it about the notion of imagination which led him to make so much use of it in his work?

The first point to make about Maimonides' account of prophecy in his *Guide of the Perplexed* is that he seems to treat it as a natural phenomenon.

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He was heavily influenced by Avicenna (ibn Sīnā) in his model of how the world works, and this model is characterized by emanation. There is taken to be a continual flow of emanations from God transmitted through a variety of separate intelligences until the active intellect is reached, which in turn provides the forms for the lowest level of existence, our sublunary world.[3] There is no obvious room in this model for individual acts of grace on particular occasions, but basically a continuing supply of grace which will be received by anyone who is an appropriate recipient. As Maimonides puts it, 'it is a natural thing: for everyone who according to his natural disposition is fit for prophecy . . . to become a prophet' (*GP* II,32; 361).[4] What is this natural disposition in human beings which puts them in the appropriate state of being for prophecy? A necessary condition is a morally acceptable character, but this is clearly not sufficient. Intellectual ability is also required. The freely flowing grace which wanders around the universe (originating from the deity) perfects an individual's rational and imaginative abilities. Theoretical perfection results from the effect of this grace on the rational faculty, while practical perfection results from its effect upon the imagination. This latter means that the prophet can both devise rules of behaviour appropriate for morally acceptable conduct and at the same time communicate important and complex truths about the universe and morality to the generality of the religious community. Insofar as the ordinary run of prophets goes (i.e. excluding the very special case of Moses), God is only a remote cause of their acquisition of prophetical powers—the active intellect is the more immediate agent of change—and only works where the recipient has orientated himself through intellectual work and an ethical lifestyle to produce an appropriate receptacle for the divine overflow of grace which makes prophecy possible.

Why is imagination important in this description of prophecy? Wolfson has argued persuasively that Maimonides tends to use the concept of imagination fairly loosely to include a wide variety of the internal senses, but what is made possible by the imagination is the combination and separation of ideas.[5] We receive impressions from our five senses, and then we may reorganize those impressions in different ways, as when we link the present impression of hunger with the impression of the previous lack of breakfast. Although imagination clearly involves thought, it is generally taken in medieval philosophy to be a form of thought more closely related to sense perception and to action than to abstract thinking itself. This is largely explained by the different objects of imagination and reason. The former generally has as its object practical action, the sort of action made possible by the sense impressions received and then *used* in some way. When we use reason to consider abstract ideas, however, this thinking normally goes on with entirely theoretical considerations in view. Imaginative thought is closely related to the future, to what will happen in the future and how the imaginer will react to those events. A person may have a strong imagination which results in veridical dreams and accurate predictions about future events. Someone who has both a strong imagination and a strong intellect, together with appropriate moral and physical qualities, is a prophet. He will not only know what is going to happen, he will know why it is going to happen, and not just at an empirical level but with some deeper insight into its divine provenance and rationale. He will also possess appropriate skills in communicating that information to others, a practical and pictorial ability which clearly involves the ability to use imagination. Maimonides recognizes that there are different levels of attainment of imagination, intellect and prophecy, and enters into some detail on how different ingredients result in different imaginative and prophetic cocktails.[6]

Let us look at the development of the notion of imagination in the Guide. In the first part he is rather rude about imagination, relating it sometimes to fancy and to problematic thinking, as in 'it is manifest that to imagine is a deficiency' (*GP* I, 47; 105), and frequently to people just getting things wrong because they stick to what they imagine to be the case rather than the truth itself which could be reached were they to use their reason adequately. He attacks the theologians, the *mutakallimún*, for claiming that 'everything that may be imagined is an admissible notion for the intellect', in other words, that everything which is imaginable is possible (*GP* I, 73; 206). He moderates his charge a little further on when he accepts that they acknowledge the illegitimacy of some images: 'they are aware of it to a certain extent; they know it and call that which may be imagined while being at the same time impossible—as for instance God's being a body—a fantasy and a vain imagining' (*GP* I, 73; 211). Yet he goes on to ask how they know that they are entitled to rule out this image. Imagination will not rule it out:

> For the imagination apprehends only that which is individual and composite as a whole, as it is apprehended by the senses; or compounds things that in their existence are separate, combining one with another . . . Thus, someone using his imagination imagines a human individual having a horse's head and wings and so on. This is what is called a thing invented and false, for nothing existent corresponds to it at all. In its apprehension, imagination is in no way able to hold aloof from matter, even if it turns a form into the extreme of abstraction. For this reason there can be no critical examination in the imagination (*GP* I, 73; 209–10).

Maimonides is pointing to an important characteristic of imagination here, namely, that in imagining there is nothing with respect to which the imaginer can be said to be mistaken, for there is nothing outside the imagination which the imagination can use to compare the imaginative presentation.

As Merleau-Ponty puts it, 'the imaginary has no depth, and does not respond to efforts to vary points of view'.[7] If the *mutakallimún* want to deny the acceptability of God having a body, how are they to do it? Is not imagination just up to us? As Wittgenstein puts it, 'images are subject to the will'.[8] Imagination by itself has no ability to distinguish between true and false possibilities, because truth values are a function of propositions, which presuppose universal concepts and intellectual abstraction. By contrast, the imagination is irretrievably tied to individual sense impressions, which it may combine arbitrarily. The imagination can then picture what is not the case and what cannot be the case, while finding it impossible to imagine what is the case. He illustrates the latter by giving the example of two people both able to stand on opposite ends of the world facing each other, and two lines extending indefinitely, so constructed that though they approach each other they never meet (*GP* I, 73; 210). If we are to understand these propositions we must employ the intellect to classify things in terms of essential and accidental properties, in terms of the species and genus to which they belong. This knowledge, which alone is capable of determining the truth-value of propositions, is knowledge of the universal characteristics of objects, while imagination concentrates upon the particular sense impressions it is given and moves them about as it wishes, with no reference to truth conditions. In the first part of the *Guide*, then, the view of imagination which emerges is hardly a very positive one.

In the second part of the *Guide*, Maimonides goes even further when he claims that 'imagination . . . is also in true reality the evil impulse' (*GP* II, 12; 280). He is referring here to our tendency to use anthropomorphic language when trying to imagine how God or angels might bring about events in the world. But when he later comes to a detailed discussion of prophecy imagination is represented in a different and far more favourable light. It is described as an entirely natural bodily faculty, which can be healthy (and so very receptive) and unhealthy (and very unreceptive). Unlike our intellectual or moral character it is impossible to acquire or improve through hard work or training in good works. One is either imaginative or one is not. Now, Maimonides makes the point that imagination is closely involved with the senses, and that it works best when the senses are fairly dormant. He adds 'It is then that a certain overflow overflows to this faculty according to its disposition, and it is the cause of veridical dreams. This same overflow is the cause of the prophecy' (GP II, 36; 370). Then he says, very surprisingly, 'There is only a difference in degree, not in kind' between such dreams and prophecy, citing a couple of Talmudic sayings which he thinks support his view, but which are far from clear and have little if any demonstrative foundation. What Maimonides seems to have in mind here is that there is a similarity between the way in which people when asleep may formulate accurate representations of future events with the use of imagination so 'that it sees the thing as it were outside, and that the thing whose origin is due to it appears to have come to it by the way of external sensation' (*GP* II, 36; 370). It is important to grasp here that Maimonides is relating *veridical* dreams with prophecy, and there is something to be said for this comparison. Such dreams have the status of raw ingredients out of which the prophet constructs a product with significant religious content.

To be a prophet, then, the overflow reaches both the rational and the imaginative faculties, where the latter is perfected through its natural disposition. If only the rational faculty is reached, then the result 'is characteristic of the class of men of science engaged in speculation' (*GP* II, 37; 374). Maimonides' low opinion of politicians emerges when he describes them as people with a perfected imagination but nothing else. Such people are lumped together with soothsayers and dreamers of veridical dreams who may well think of themselves as prophets because they 'have—even while they are awake—extraordinary imaginings, dreams and amazed states' (ibid.). Maimonides goes on to widen the range of people with veridical predictions even further when he claims 'Similarly the faculty of divination exists in all people, but varies in degree' (*GP* II, 38; 376). What he means by this, though, is quite restricted, that some people (indeed, all people) can work their way from the present situation to some sort of accurate prediction of what will happen in the future. This leads him to describe in some detail the internal workings of prophecy. What happens when the overflow perfects both the imagination and the rational faculty is that the latter works out very quickly what is going to happen, while the imagination puts this information into the appropriate form so that it appears to be sensory data. Our reason runs through an argument process extremely quickly, without all the intermediary steps of premises, inferences and evidence occurring to us, and then the imagination represents the result of this lightening exercise of reasoning in a figurative form which makes it comprehensible to us. Maimonides is using a notion here imported from the work of Avicenna, and ultimately Aristotle, namely, that the things in the world are cognizable by syllogistic reasoning which mirrors in some way the world's structure, and if we could master the major premises of these syllogisms the structure of the world would become perspicuous to us. The prophet masters some of these and thus is able to relate some aspects of present reality to the future, as 'all things bear witness to one another and indicate one another' (*GP* II, 38; 377).[9]

This description of prophecy and its distant but nonetheless significant link with accurate predictions emphasizes yet again the naturalness of being a prophet, of having the appropriate characteristics for that role. When

Maimonides comes to discuss the meaning of terms used in scriptural descriptions of prophecy, this impression is strengthened. Referring to Daniel, he says:

> The speech of the angel to him and his setting him upright, all this happened in a vision of prophecy. In a state such as this the senses too cease to function, and the overflow in question comes to the rational faculty and overflows from it to the imaginative faculty so that the latter becomes perfect and performs its function (GP 11,, 41; 385).

When things happen through the agency of angels and when God is said to have spoken to someone, these events all take place 'in a dream or in a vision of prophecy' (*GP* II, 41; 386). Maimonides repeats this point several times, emphasizing that 'It should by no means occur to your thought that an angel can be seen or that the speech of an angel can be heard except in a vision of prophecy or in a dream of prophecy', to which he adds, rather threateningly for the literalist, 'You can draw inferences from what I have mentioned as to what remains of the things that I have not mentioned' (*GP* II, 42; 390). Sometimes these visions are taken to constitute parables in themselves which then requires the imagination to shift through possible interpretations of equivocal terms and their denotations. Even where there is no direct reference to the presence of an angel or a vision or a dream when we come to passages in which God apparently spoke directly to people, we should understand that the reference to a dream or vision is implicit in such a passage (*GP* II, 46; 404). All such apparent communication requires some form of intermediation by the imaginative faculty (*GP* II, 45; 403) with the exception, of course, of the very special paradigmatic form of prophecy enjoyed by Moses. Indeed, Maimonides is rather sharp with people who interpret literally scriptural passages in which someone is ordered to do something by a divine source when he says that 'Only those weak in syllogistic reasoning fancy with regard to all this that the prophet tells that he was ordered to do certain things and hence did them' (*GP* II. 46; 405).

It seems clear that when Maimonides talks about angels existing, he is using a special sense of existence. Although he starts *GP* II, 6 with the positive statement that 'The fact that angels exist does not require that a proof deriving from the Law be brought forward. For the Torah has stated this in a number of passages' (261), he later comments:

> Accordingly, Midrash Qoheleth has the following text: when man sleeps, his soul speaks to the angel, and the angel to the cherub. Thereby they have stated plainly to him who understands and cognizes intellectually that the imaginative faculty is likewise called an angel and that the intellect is called a cherub. (264–5)

'Soul' is generally taken to mean 'common sense', the faculty which first receives the impressions of the five senses and passes them onto the imagination (the angel). Common sense provides the imagination with sense impressions, which are then passed on in the form of images to the intellect where they are tansformed into intellectual concepts. Imagination is the obvious candidate for the role of mediating between the senses and the intellect, and is especially relevant for prophecy. Imagination converts any kind of representation, whether intellectual, sensory or emotional, into powerful symbols and vivid ideas which then relate very directly to the question of appropriate action. This transformation into symbols makes possible the subsequent activity of the creature involved. The prophet is concerned with the actions of his community, and with impelling those actions to take a particular form and aim for a certain end. At the same time he realises that he must present his case in a form which will be effective in persuading people of the necessity and desirability of change, and this involves imagination too. Imagination is obliged to deal figuratively with its data, because it is a material faculty and cannot as such grasp the universal and the immaterial. Normally, imagination deals with fairly low-level material, concerned as we are with our everyday lives and proximate issues. When we are asleep, though, the imagination is free to work on material which leads to knowledge in some people of future events, while the prophet's imagination is so well developed that he can have this sort of knowledge, and more, in waking life, and it can seem to have similar experimental status as his normal sense data.

The prophet, then, receives in a vision a message of some kind, a private message, one which should not be taken to be available to all in the same way as it is available to him. Yet this message is also supposed to have objective validity, and to touch on extremely important aspects of religious life within a community. How objective can it be when we are told (i) to discount all ideas that angels actually exist or that prophets are really ordered to do things, (ii) that the experiences which the prophet has are his alone, generically related to dreams and come about only if he has a well-developed imagination, and (iii) becoming a prophet is to a degree a matter of nature rather than nurture, like having red hair. Add to all these points Maimonides' view that the absence of prophecy from long periods of Jewish life is not taken to have anything directly to do with God's wishes but rather with the exigencies of life in exile. The minds of the people who are constituted in the appropriate manner to receive the overflow are over-involved with contemporary practical difficulties of coping with the difficult times and their resulting debilitating effects upon the realization of intellectual perfection (*GP* II, 36; 373). It is hardly surprising that commentators should have taken this collection of views as very challenging to the intellectual bases of the interpretation of scripture and religion. If we look briefly at the criticisms of one of Maimonides' acutest critics, Isaac Abrabanel, we find a very clear set of arguments that the former's theory of prophecy is misguided. The correct position is that prophecy is not a natural event, but a miracle divinely brought about. God can grant prophecy to whomever he wishes, and intellectual, imaginative and physical perfection is not required (although moral qualities still are). Prophets other than Moses do not have to employ their imagination when prophesying, they can attain prophecy by the use of their intellects alone. Dreams and prophecy are not part of the same species at all, and the rabbinic passages which Maimonides quotes should be taken as claims of the large differences between prophecy and dreams, not their similarity. In short, the difference between Maimonides and what might be thought of as the 'standard' religious view is well put by Abrabanel in his use of the image of the prophet's mind being like a mirror reflecting a divine message, where 'far be it from God to make his prophets similar to fools, madmen, and the sick by the impression of images upon their eyes that do not exist outside the mind'.[10] What is reflected in the mirror of the mind must be, in the case of prophecy, something sent by God which is true, objective and real, not the result of someone's imagination or something like the train of events which takes place in a dream.

Let us look in some more detail at this question of the objectivity of prophecy on Maimonides' view. His predecessor Avicenna discussed this problem and rather ambiguously refers to angels as existing in both an absolute sense and relatively to us, but from his account it seems clear that what is meant is that the prophetic message is 'real', but the angelic appearance is just that, an impression which helps the recipient understand the message.[11] A sympathetic interpretation of Maimonides is provided by Hillel of Verona, who discusses Jacob's struggle with the angel thus:

> There is no doubt whatever that the struggle was literally real . . . I will never believe though that the angel was a body with joints and arms, but it happened like this: the angel, by means of a spiritual divine power, created in the air surrounding Jacob motions of thrust and pressure, through which the particles of air were violently moved and by their movement forced the body of Jacob, by pressing and coercing it as in the thrust of wrestling . . . to move to and fro . . . But the angel himself appeared to him, in truth, only in a 'prophetical vision' . . . Thus the story of this event is literally true, as the real happenings were combined with the prophetical vision.[12]

This interpretation of Jacob's confrontation with the angel as a form of 'shadow wrestling' no doubt comes nearer to the literal meaning of the biblical text than Maimonides' view, yet remains basically unsatisfactory. Objectivity is based on the distinction between appearance and reality. To say that it is an objective matter whether or not a speaker's statement is true is to maintain that there is a clear difference between the claim's merely seeming to be true to the speaker, and its actually being the case. Maimonides' description of prophecy does not appear to leave room for objectivity with respect to the descriptive content of the prophetic utterance as these occur in scriptural passages.

Perhaps we can get clearer on the ontological status of the objects of prophetic imagination in Maimonides' account by looking at one of its sources, the discussion which Aristotle provides of *phantasia*, which has some meanings which incorporate the notion of imagination, and others which do not.[13] For our purpose here it will not be too misleading to look at Aristotle's use of this term where it comes close to imagination. Aristotle links dreams with imagination, and yet they quite evidently differ from the latter in terms both of not being subject to the will and of not being emotionally detached from the nature of the experience undergone. When we dream we may well be terrified of the experiences we confront, whereas if we imagine being in a terrifying situation we might manage to remain detached from its emotional features. In addition, we can summon up imaginative experiences more-or-less at will, while dreams are not in this way under our control. Malcolm Schofield argues persuasively that what links dreams and imagination is the seeing of aspects. Aristotle's view of what happens in dreams is that something looks like something else, due to some small resemblance which it bears to that other thing. This represents a form of seeing as where one is 'forced' to see particular aspects at certain times, the sort of case in which one says something like 'I cannot help seeing x as y'. This is particularly the case when through some physical or mental disorder the aspects which arise are not under our control, but come about through a causal process. This is precisely the situation in the description which Aristotle and Maimonides give of veridical dreams; they occur apparently quite arbitrarily to certain people. The fact that the people who have such dreams are far from being the best and wisest led Aristotle to doubt that the source of such dreams was divine (*De divinatione per somnum* I, 462b19–24). As with Aristotle, Maimonides argues that the nature of individual minds has something to do with the ability to 'pick up' veridical dreams, and he adds that their external sources lie in the movements of the spheres which have an effect upon consciousnesses that are tuned into them. All this means is that some people are able to work out partially, in most part intuitively and without consciously thinking about it, how the world will change and develop over a period. They then grasp the future course of events, perhaps in the form of a dream which takes place when they are not concerned with more pressing matters. So when Maimonides relates prophecy to dreams this is not in itself to disparage the status of prophecy, but to point out that both phenomena involve the seeing of aspects and the reception of experiences which unlike most imagination is not under the control of the people involved. The dreams Maimonides compares with prophecy are not haphazard phenomena but controlled and directed reports of future events which mirror to a degree the way in which the world is transformed from one stage to another. They should not be compared with the ravings of fools and lunatics.

However, even if this account of veridical dreams holds water, the question of the objectivity of the prophetic reports remains. It may be acceptable to anchor prophecy in the solid metaphysical foundations of the celestial spheres and the active intellect which together with the prophet's own faculties participate directly in the construction of prophetic knowledge. Of course, many people would feel distinctly unhappy about this model of prophetic causation, and the way in which Maimonides presents this process as a natural phenomenon, over which God appears to have no more than nominal control, yet these are not objections against the *objectivity* of the prophetic message. Imagination is only a necessary condition of the attainment of prophecy, and far from being sufficient. The prophet is not taken to be a creative, quasi-poetic genius intent on producing aesthetic objects rather than reporting historical truth. Maimonides makes it clear that the imagination only comes into operation after the intellect has been affected by the overflow of the active intellect, and because it deals with particular images rather than universal concepts, it is crucially involved in the accurate prediction of future *individual* events by producing the minor premises in a large number of syllogistic reasonings. In addition, as we have seen, imagination is also involved in the communication of the prophecy to the community by enabling the prophet to explain his knowledge in the most comprehensible and persuasive manner.

This could all be accepted and yet still the challenge remains to explain how we can regard the prophetic message as *objective* when we are told by Maimonides that much of this message is in the form of parables, with ambiguous images and equivocal language, with a literal meaning which appears to be very different from its symbolic meaning.

When we are told that angels visited Lot and told him to escape from Sodom with his wife, are we being told something which is literally true? Or is this merely a story designed to be believed by the unsophisticated masses, and seen behind by the intellectual élite for what it is, a parable indicating something else? We can get clearer on these questions by returning to Aristotle's discussion of the concept of imagination. One of the points which he makes about this concept is that it seems to hover between perception and thinking. He argues that:

> It is not possible to think without imagining. For the same effect occurs in thinking as in drawing a diagram. For in the latter case, though we do not make any

> use of the fact that the size of the triangle is determinate, we nonetheless draw it with a determinate size. And similarly someone who is thinking, even if he is not thinking of something with a size, places something with a size before his eyes, but thinks of it not as having a size. (*De memoria*, 449b31–450a5)

The process of thinking is distinct from imagination, but it cannot go on without imagination. Aristotle's point here is that what one engages in thinking about and what one imagines in so thinking may be distinct in this sense. If someone wishes to make a point about triangles, she may well make a point about a particular triangle, but in imagining the particular triangle she is not (just) thinking about that triangle, but about all triangles. The prophetic vision has a certain content which enables us to work towards a more general point; it may be a fantasy and yet at the same time not illusory or deceptive, but a symbolic representation of reality.[14] The story of Sodom, then, may be in its entirety a prophetic fantasy experienced by Abraham. It is irrelevant to ask about the details of the story as its purpose is not to give an historical analysis of a factual event, but to present an allegory in which the wickedness of Sodom and the virtue of Lot are contrasted. If we return to Aristotle's point about imagination, what we think about and what we imagine in so thinking may be distinct. We are to think about a contrast between wickedness and virtue, and we have to imagine this within a particular narrative framework. The point of talking about a particular triangle is not to talk about that particular triangle, but about something else, *viz.* all triangles. The point of talking about Lot and Sodom is not to talk about a particular event, but about something else, the contrast between virtue and vice. The question of the historical accuracy of the report of that event, like the question of whether there actually is a triangle of the same size as the one imagined, is just irrelevant. It does not arise.

The only objectivity which we can discuss here is the objectivity of the relationship between the parable and its implications, between how we think of a state of affairs and the state of affairs which as a consequence is made comprehensible to us. Objectivity thus lies in the way in which what we imagine implies what we can think, and in what causally led to that exercise of imagination. If we think in this way about the use which Maimonides makes of the notions of the imagination and prophecy (and again, it must be emphasized, it is non-Mosaic prophecy which is at issue here), then we can defuse much of the literalist critique and regard the question 'But did it really happen?' as besides the point. Maimonides' position is nicely encapsulated to a degree in a conversation in a short story by Chekhov called 'The black monk'. In this story Kovrin has a vision of a black monk, who says to Kovrin,

> 'The mirage, the legend and I are all the products of your excited imagination. I am the phantom'.

'Then you do not exist?' Kovrin asked.
'Think what you like', the monk answered with a faint smile. 'I exist in your imagination, and your imagination is part of nature, consequently I exist in nature too'.[15]

NOTES

1 Teicher, J., Christian theology and the Jewish opposition to Maimonides. *Journal of theological studies*, **XLIII** (1942): 68–76.
2 Aquinas and Nahmanides, for instance.
3 For a fuller account of the use of the notion of emanation in medieval Jewish and Islamic philosophy, see Leaman, O., *At introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1985, pp. 57–9.
4 Quotations from Maimonides are taken from Maimonides, *Guide of the perplexed* S. Pines, trans. Chicago, II: University of Chicago Press, 1963. (with occasional changes to the translation). The abbreviation *GP* will be used followed by the part number, chapter and page in the Pines translation.
5 Wolfson, H., Maimonides on the internal senses. *Jewish Quarterly Review*, **51** (1935): 441–67.
6 For a brief but excellent account of the different kinds of imaginative and intellectual mixtures see Sirat, C., *A history of Jewish philosophy in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1985, pp. 193–7.
7 Merleau-Ponty, M., *Phenomenology of perception*. New York: Humanities Press. 1962, p. 323.
8 Wittgenstein, L., in *Zettel* (G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, eds). Oxford: Blackwell. 1967, p. 621.
9 For more detail on Avicenna's view here see Leaman, *Introduction* (Op. cit.), pp. 111–13.
10 Abrabanel, I., *Commentary on the Moreh Nebukhim* (A. Reines, trans.). *Maimonides and Abrabanel on Prophecy*. Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College of America. 1970, p. 123.
11 Discussed in Rahman, F., *Prophecy in Islam*. London, Allen and Unwin. 1958, p. 72.
12 Hillel, *Ozar Nehmad*, ii.128, translated in Teicher (op. cit.), p. 73.
13 For a subtle account of Aristotle on the imagination see Schofield, M., Aristotle on the imagination, in *Aristotle on mind and the senses* (G. E. R. Lloyd and G. E. L. Owen, eds). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1978, pp. 99–139.
14 The role of stories and their relationship with lies in medieval Jewish and Islamic philosophy is discussed in Leaman, *Introduction* (op. cit.), pp. 182–5.
15 Chekhov, A., The black monk, in *The Grasshopper and other Stories* (A. Chamot, trans.) London: Stanley Paul. 1921, p. 77.

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IN PRAISE OF AMBIGUITY: A RESPONSE TO JONATHAN HARROP'S CRITIQUE OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF DAVID MARTIN

David W. Smith

In a recent article entitled 'The Limits of Sociology in the Work of David Martin'[1] Jonathan D. Harrop has made a number of serious criticisms of Martin's theoretical and methodological approaches to the sociology of religion. Harrop focusses upon a somewhat obscure essay of Martin's ('Can The Church Survive'[2]) which, he claims, represents 'a cameo of Martin's sociology of religion'.[3] This seems to me to be a curious way of approaching the work of so seminal a thinker as David Martin; doubtless it is easier to evaluate a single essay rather than confront the challenge of Martin's major contributions to the analysis of contemporary culture, but such a procedure seems bound to lead to distortion and misrepresentation. Martin's work, like that of many other analysts of modern culture, is, to be sure, multi-faceted and reflects various shifts of perspective over the years. These changes are doubtless the result of both the complexity of the subject matter dealt with and the altered perceptions that are a normal part of the pattern of reputable scholarship. This being so, how can a single essay devoted to such a narrowly defined subject as the survival of the institution of the Church possibly be a distillation of Martin's entire sociology of religion? This sense of unease concerning Harrop's methodology is soon shown to be more than justified when his critique is seen to rest upon a series of fundamental misrepresentations of Martin's work.

According to Harrop, Martin's definition of religion excludes its manifestation ‚outside ecclesiastical establishments and locates it as 'unambiguously centred in Canterbury or Rome . .'.[4] This may or may not be a correct reading of the essay cited by Harrop, but it is certainly not an accurate statement of the view of religion found on the pages of Martin's major works. For example, there is no ambiguity about the definition of religion given in *A General Theory of Secularization*: religion, says Martin, involves 'acceptance of a world of reality beyond the observable world known to science, to which are ascribed meanings and purposes completing

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and transcending those of the purely human realm'.[5] Clearly Martin has opted for a substantive, as against a functional, definition of religion. However, he is careful to distance himself from a narrowly institutionalized understanding of religious phenomena. Canterbury and Rome clearly have no monopoly on human perceptions of 'a level of reality beyond the observable world known to science'. And, consistent with this approach to religion, Martin frequently warns us against concentrating exclusive attention on institutional, or ecclesiastical, religion. Indeed, his works are peppered with references to extra-ecclesial religiosity: he has warned sociologists who are inclined toward the 'received view' of secularization as a before-and-after story (before, a unified Christian culture; after, a pluralistic post-Christian culture) that the realities of European cultural and religious history confront us with a much messier and more complex picture. Thus, far from confining religion to Canterbury and Rome, Martin deserves credit for drawing our attention to the continuing significance of pre-Christian religion in Europe and has frequently insisted that the sociology of religion pay proper attention to various strata of extra-ecclesial religion.[6] Sociology must not be misled by an over-concentration upon orthodox religion, but must concern itself with the 'luxuriant theological undergrowth', or 'subterranean theologies', which provide the 'working core of belief more often than is recognized'.[7] Moreover, whatever philosophical or methodological differences may exist between Martin and Robert Bellah, *both* men have directed our attention toward 'civic', or 'civil', religion. Martin is perfectly well aware of the growth of a 'Ciceronian' form of religiousness which 'plays down the theme of salvation' and extols stoic devotion to the ideals of citizenship.[8]

Given all this, Harrop's claim that David Martin denies the existence of religion outside ecclesiastical establishments is surely a grotesque caricature. On the contrary, Martin has done as much as anyone to liberate the sociology of religion from an exclusive focus on institutional religion and his work has been an important stimulus in the study of various forms of folk, or implicit, religion. Equally puzzling is Harrop's suggestion that Martin considers the 12th Century to provide a 'base line' when society was 'at its most religious'. But this is surely the very opposite of David Martin's position. His entire work appears to constitute a protest *against* just such a before-and-after view of European history. Following Friedrich Heer he challenges the view that Europe was fully Christianized in the 12th-century, or at any other time.[9] Martin's frequently quoted statement that sociologists handle their perceptions 'in terms of a handy historical tripod' one leg of which rests firmly in official Catholicism in the 12th-century, is directed against unilateralist versions of history which proceed on the false assumption that Europe was once pervasively religious.[10]

Having misunderstood and, I suggest, misrepresented Martin's view of religion, Harrop is bound to distort his position with regard to secularization. Martin is accused of 'vagueness', of the 'minimization of secularization' and of making 'extraordinarily tenacious attacks on secularization'.[11] These are serious charges against a scholar who has contributed work of fundamental importance in the area of secularisation theory. The source of all the trouble is, according to Harrop, Martin's Christian beliefs which have seduced him from a pure scientific standpoint into the clutches of the unacceptable 'hybrid discipline' of socio-theology.

Now, of course, the problems facing people with deeply held religious beliefs within the sphere of sociology are very real. How such beliefs can be related to a scientific discipline which tends in the direction of relativization or how such people can avoid introducing religious bias into their analyses, are valid and important questions. However, my concern here is with Jonathan Harrop's critique of Martin's sociology of religion and I want to make just two comment on this.

First, at the level of secularization theory, Harrop's basic criticism is that Martin's Christianity predisposes him to underestimate and mystify the plain fact of secularization. Theological conviction demands the revival and continuance of the Church, and this 'higher authority' then shapes, or rather distorts, Martin's sociology.[12] Underlying this criticism is Harrop's own conviction that the 'facts of social reality' are perfectly plain and can be observed by any unprejudiced (which means, in this context, non-religious) analyst. Harrop speaks of the 'understandable assumption' made by 'most sociologists' that religion and secularity are opposites. Social reality *must* conform to a pattern which makes possible neat, logical systems of before-and-after analysis. Thus, 'Either secularization is occuring or it is not. Either religion is viable outside the church or it is not. Either the secular world is becoming more, or less, secular but not both'.[13] Clearly, not only David Martin but Thomas Luckmann, Jacques Ellul, Peter Berger, Hans Mol, and many others, have written in vain.[14] For the truth is that Harrop's 'understandable assumption' that religion and secularity are polar opposites rests upon a particular ideological foundation which is no longer accepted uncritically by 'most sociologists' but is increasingly seen to require radical questioning. Indeed, the very fuzziness which Harrop detects and bemoans in Martin's sociology may be due not to the distorting influence of personal religious convictions (although such bias is certainly possible), but to the fact that *social reality does not actually fit very well into the neat categories expected of it by sociologists who are inclined to think within rationalist and evolutionistic frames of reference.*

Which brings me to the second point. When Harrop accuses David Martin of distorting social facts in the interests of a religious ideology, we are entitled to ask what motivates his own fierce attack? His reply will doubtless be that his perspective is a *truly* sociological one. While sociologists like Martin find secularization problematic because they look at it through the mystifying lens of religious belief, Harrop can claim that the concept presents no difficulties to 'most sociologists'.[15] In other words, he believes that he stands with an elect group of social scientists who have achieved a genuinely objective viewpoint on social reality and so are able to theorize on social processes unencumbered by the regrettable biases which distort and mystify the analyses of religious men like Martin. This assumption is, I suggest, unwarranted. The fact is, we have good reason to be suspicious of attempts to expose other peoples' bias while remaining un-self-critical concerning one's own presuppositions. Roland Robertson has pointed out that the debate over secularization 'constitutes a particularly critical site upon which the identity crisis of the sociologist is being experienced' and that it is a highly significant case of scholars 'grounding their analyses in deeply held views about the *raison d'être* of human life'.[16] Harrop is perfectly entitled to point out the way in which he believes Martin's personal religious faith distorted his sociological analysis but, by the same token, we must ask whether his own perceptions may not be influenced by ideology to the extent that he appears to be completely unaware? Harrop's repeated assertion that he finds the concept of secularization unproblematic reminds one of Jeffrey Hadden's comment that the inherited model of secularization is not really a theory at all, *but a doctrine*: 'It has not required careful scrutiny because it is self-evident. We have sacralized our commitment to secularization'.[17] Such a sacralized concept is capable of distorting our perceptions of social reality, of leading to generalizations on the basis of totally inadequate empirical evidence, no less than is the case with religious ideology.

In summary then, I do not deny that religious or theological convictions may lead the scholar who holds them to a distorted sociological theory. Nor do I reject entirely Harrop's criticism of David Martin which may well be justified at certain points. What I do reject is his claim to objectivity and an unbiased sociological perspective from which viewpoint he can see the true facts about secularization with a clarity denied to men who still have half an eye on heaven. This claim I believe to be false and to be disproved by Harrop's own writing which supplies clear evidence of Hadden's thesis that secularization has too often become a *sacred* concept, so self-evident, so transparently obvious, as scarcely to need demonstration. On the contrary, secularization *is* problematic, *is* ambiguous, *is* capable of divergent interpretations. Given this situation, it is imperative that sociologists of religion, no less than theologians and missiologists, should approach the subject in a spirit of humility and with a readiness to be self-critical in regard to the prior beliefs they bring to the debate.

NOTES

1 Jonathan D. Harrop, 'The Limits of Sociology in the Work of David Martin. Towards a Critique of David Martin's Sociology of Religion Centred on his Essay: "Can The Church Survive"'. *Religion*, **17**, 1987: p173–192.

2 David Martin, 'Can The Church Survive?' in *Tracts Against The Times*. Guildford, Lutterworth Press, 1973.

3 Harrop, p. 173.

4 Ibid., p. 177.

5 David Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization*. Oxford, Blackwell, 1978, p.12.

6 Ibid., p. 249.

7 David Martin, *The Religious and The Secular*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969, p. 108.

8 David Martin, *The Dilemmas of Contemporary Religion*. Oxford, Blackwell, 1978, p. 5f.

9 Martin, *The Religious and The Secular*, p. 4f.

10 Ibid., pp. 65–66.

11 Harrop, pp. 179, 182, 185.

12 Ibid., pp. 178, 186.

13 Ibid., p. 186.

14 Thomas Luckmann, (*The Invisible Religion*, New York: MacMillan, 1967), argued precisely that secularization was accompanied by and led to quite new social forms of religion; Jacques Ellul (*The New Demons*, New York, Seabury Press, 1975) presented a similar thesis, while Hans Mol (*Identity And The Sacred*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1976) argued that pervasive secularity and resurgent religiousness *both* characterize the current American scene.

15 Harrop, p. 190.

16 Roland Robertson, *Meaning and Change: Explorations in the Cultural Sociology of Modern Societies*. Oxford, Blackwell, 1978, pp. 260–261.

17 Jeffrey Hadden, Towards Desacralizing Secularization Theory, *Social Forces*, **65(3)**, 1987: 594.

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REVIEW ARTICLE

BOEHME'S MYSTICISM

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David Walsh, *The Mysticism of Innerworldly Fulfilment: A Study of Jacob Boehme*. Gainesville, University of Florida Humanities Monographs, 53. x + 139 pp.

Academic divisions of labour can sometimes inhibit intellectual reappraisals, and this is certainly the case with regard to theology's appreciation of the early modern period in western intellectual history. Theology has mostly confined its interest to the mainstream Reformation, and it has been left to secular historians to show just how important neo-gnosticism and religious esotericism was in the development of the 'Renaissance'. But this realization has important implications for the comprehension of the post-mediaeval crisis of Christianity in the west, and the emergence of a secular modernity. Much of contemporary theology is characterized by the stance it takes towards these matters, and so a failure to take account of the re-appraisal of the Renaissance may be of serious consequence.

This situation might be partially remedied if theologians read David Walsh's new book. It is in fact rather more than a monograph, as it seeks not only to understand more fully the existential context for Boehme's mysticism, and the central thrust of his thought, but also to propose a thesis concerning the wide extent of his influence, and even to provide a measure of theological appraisal.

Walsh considers that Boehme is the thinker who most clearly crystallizes certain dominant tendencies in Renaissance thought. This is perhaps a doubtful judgement to make concerning something so various, and Walsh seems on surer ground when he claims that Boehme was the inaugurator of a philosophy which understood all of reality as a process of divine self-realization through the outworking of a process of dialectical contradiction. There is little doubt that here Boehme was the prime source for certain currents within later Romanticism and Idealism. However, Walsh exaggerates Boehme's originality; in his most radical notions he is surely anticipated by the Jewish Kabbalists, and especially Isaac Luria.

The book gives a general, though by no means exhaustive, account of Boehme's thought which will be extremely useful to anyone daunted by the tortuous and repetitive character of his writings, much of them couched in the language of alchemical symbolism. Beyond the level of exposition, Walsh tries to comprehend the genesis of Boehme's revolutionary outlook. Here he stresses two aspects in particular. First of all that Boehme's theosophy was a resolution of a crisis of melancholia, in which Boehme despaired of the failure of religious reform, was weighed down by the predominance of evil, conflict and obtuseness in the world, and longed for an immediate experience of a seemingly absent God.

The resolution was final and drastic in that Boehme evolved a theodicy which understood evil as a necessary moment in the realization and self-revelation of the divine good, and a form of *gnosis* which suggested that all the secrets of a divine-natural creative process might be actively penetrated by human understanding. The other side to Boehme's promotion of the fullest possible divine presence as an immanent reality was a stress on humanity as a participative agent in the work of creation, and as the accomplisher of a cosmic salvation from a condition of estrangement in which even the being of God is implicated. Here Boehme takes over the Kabbalist 'reversal' which makes humanity also the bearer and God also the recipient of redemptive salvation.

The second aspect stressed by Walsh is the intimate relation between Boehme's mystical experience and his symbolic and theoretical elaborations. Boehme himself made strong claims concerning the importance of his 'illuminations', and this self-understanding is perpetuated in the image of the 'visionary shoemaker of Görlitz'. But Walsh rightly emphasizes that the imagery in which Boehme describes his experiences has a specific (though complex) cultural ancestry, and that the experiences themselves must be related to Boehme's emotional and intellectual crisis. He does not, however, consider the question of the relation of symbolization to experience in any depth, although Boehme is clearly a subject of great relevance to this problem in general, not merely as an example, but as an implicit theorist.

One should note here how, in a sense, the very mode of Boehme's mysticism opposes the notion that symbolization is merely 'secondary' in relation to a more 'original' experience. For while Boehme, following German mystical tradition talks of *Gelassenheit*, this opening out to God is only enabled by a renewed effort at self-expression and attempt to make luminous the finite structures of the world. When Boehme talks of the experiential passage through the 'dark fire' of necessarily undergone desire and anger to the emergence of the 'high light' of synthesis, neither the fire nor the light are to be understood simply as 'symbols' in the usual sense. The arrival at these concrete concepts is itself an integral part of the experience, and without this 'work' God would not show himself by means of a further self-becoming which we ourselves assist. Moreover, the spiritual processes are taken to have their correlates in physical nature, and it is in fact only in this sphere, understood as the necessary external expression of the inwardly spiritual, that spiritual processes can arrive at their final resolution. Walsh possibly plays down the alchemical aspects of Boehme's thought, tied as it is to an eschatological expectation of cosmic renewal (this aspect also, is partially taken up by later Romantics in the form of *naturphilosophie*).

Walsh's exploration of the fundamental motivations behind Boehme's theosophy is undertaken in the interests of comprehending his later influence. His appeal is accounted for in terms of his development of a theodicy and a gnosis which reconcile us to inner-worldly processes, and endow them with a transcendent significance. Boehme did not apply his notions to human culture and society, yet Walsh argues that he made possible 'the construction of history as a dialectical process moving towards its perfection in time' (p. 7). Walsh quotes the specifically Behmenist language of some of Hegel's early writings to show that it was from Boehme that Hegel derived the notion of a divine spirit which must become 'other' to itself if it is to be determinate and self-aware, yet must also pass through an experience of this otherness as alien self-estrangement (this is the 'dark fire' and the 'divine wrath' in Boehme).

This, of course, is not an original observation, but Walsh wishes to go further, and argue, following Eric Voegelin, (especially, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, 1968) that all modern 'secular ideologies' are not so much the product of the secularizing enlightenment, as of a gnostic and 'innerwordly' religious outlook on the Behmenist model, which looks for some ultimate fulfilment within the processes of history. By 'ideologies' Walsh, like Voegelin, is thinking of secular movements which nevertheless possess messianic and even ecclesiastical qualities, i.e. Positivism, Communism, National Socialism, and psycho-analysis (mentioned by Voegelin but not by Walsh).

Walsh does not perhaps provide sufficient indication of the evidence for this 'gnostic thesis', which indeed Voegelin himself tended to present in a rather generalized manner. However, one can certainly make out the case in relation to Hegel, and—more interestingly—in relation to Marx, although I am less convinced about Comte. The other thinkers Walsh cites as modern 'Behmenists'—Teilhard, Jung, Berdyaev—are isolated figures with minority followings rather than representatives of 'modern mass ideologies'. Freud would surely be a more significant example, and one could easily argue that the gnostic pattern of a necessary passage through evil and self-destructive desire on the way to final self-realization appears here also.

However, a more serious criticism might be made. Walsh declares, again following Voegelin, that neither liberalism nor conservatism are able to mount a 'principled opposition' to the gnostic ideologies which have their success through the 'usurping of the underlying criteria of legitimacy' (p. 2), which presumably derive from the liberal enlightenment. However, the question here is whether 'liberalism' and 'conservatism' do not also include ideological content, and whether their secularity is as pure as it seems.

For once one has started to play the genetic game (and I think Walsh is right to play it) then it must be played thoroughly and comprehensively. One would have to note that the gnostic current is not the only case where secular thought is ushered in, even (for this is the radical point of the genetic arguments) actually *constituted* by theological tendencies that are 'deviant' when compared to the 'classical' outlooks of the patristic and high scholastic periods. The developers of modern empiricism and rationalism, like Hobbes, Locke and Descartes, are profoundly marked by late mediaeval fideism and voluntarism, and often develop their own versions of the *Homo Creator* theme which here, as in Boehme, remains a highly theological, rather than simply anti-theological, secularizing *motif*. Similarly, 18th-century liberals, including the promoters of 'political economy' are very much concerned with a theodicy which endeavours in one fashion or another to understand evil as *necessary* evil. It seems that it is not just the 'mass ideologies' that must be understood as the perpetuation of Christian heresy, but rather modernity in general.

In the final chapter of this book, Walsh tries to develop a critique of the Boehme-inspired vision which he describes as 'this-worldly mysticism'. He rightly regards as dangerous, and anti-personalist, an outlook which subjects God to the necessity of estrangement and evil. As he says, this may encourage indifference to 'temporary' ills, or the promotion of conflict as the inevitable route to final reconciliation, or the expectation that the overcoming of such-and-such a particular finite ill will amount to the abolition of the possibility of evil once and for all.

Yet Walsh's critique does not go far enough. He is in fact willing to accept a modified version of Boehme's theses concerning evil in a fashion which tends to confirm what I have said about modern liberalism also being implicated in unacceptable theodicies. Walsh wishes to insist on the divine transcendence and perfection, but appears to suggest that for human beings ethical perfection is *necessarily* attained (as an implication of createdness, and not merely fallenness) only by way of 'contrast' and 'struggle'. This indicates that the vision of virtue as 'overcoming' (a Stoic one?) is clearly more generally embedded in the western tradition, than in the seedplots of esotericism alone. It is in fact striking how, with the gradual decline of belief in a really existent lost paradise, the hellenic idea of a simultaneous Creation-and-Fall has crept back into many strands of Christian theology. One can say here that possibly the evolutionary concept has had more drastic consequences for the fundamental shape of Christian belief than most Church-people are prepared to admit. At the same time, though, one may note that the hellenic idea had started to re-intrude well before Darwin, and one could perhaps ascribe this to the (still unexplained?) widespread recurrence of heresy *rather* than to the exigencies of scientific discoveries. In other words we are dealing with a shift in discourse whose basis remains partly mysterious.

Instead of grasping the nettle, and pointing to the denial of the contingency of finite evil, and the absolute difference between Creator and created as the major marks of Boehme's 'heretical' position, Walsh locates these instead in the proclamation of the possibility of a final achievement of salvation within the created order. However, this immanent apocalypticism does not seem necessarily incompatible with orthodoxy. One suspects here that political predilections and distastes are interfering with Walsh's categorization.

Walsh is much nearer the mark when he echoes the criticisms made of Behmenism and Hegelianism by Kierkegaard's compatriot and contemporary, Hans Martensen. (It is interesting to note that the identity of modern protestant, post-Hegelian theology with ancient gnosticism is sometimes also affirmed by its promoters, for example F. C. Baur.) These were especially directed against the idea of divine self-realization through the created world. Martensen accuses Boehme of too extreme an anthropomorphism which imagines that God must undergo a process of becoming from an original unrealized potentiality. The converse side of this is the virtual promotion of human beings to equal dignity with God, and the replacement of mystical contemplative union with a God whose depths remain unfathomable, by a subjective, and non-ecstatic gnosis which attains to a totally determinate self-illumination.

All this is secured for Boehme, as Walsh notes, by a heretical version of the doctrine of the Trinity which explicitly abandons the notion of three subsistently related persons in favour of a process of dynamic differentiation and renewed synthesis within a single *Geist*. This process is then not other than God's involvement with the world, and our own self-becoming.

Yet while this may be the case Walsh, like others, fails to observe that Boehme is at least trying to create a metaphysic which conceives of God throughout in Trinitarian fashion, and which insists on the essential connection between God's inner differentiation and his positing of external difference in the Creation. These *desiderata* are by no means consistently attained within orthodox theology, and this may well explain our fascination with the bizarre fruitfulness of admittedly heretical and inadequate Trinitarianisms in thinkers like Boehme and Hegel.

The specifically Trinitarian character of Boehme's metaphysic (and what makes it a 'theosophy', a doctrine of the divine inner life) surely consists in the view that even the divine understanding is found in self-expression, that for God also, knowledge is not merely action, but even the transitive, differentiating action of 'art'. It would be very easy to see this as just a part of Boehme's inauguration of modern decadence with its pre-dilection for seeing knowledge as fundamentally to do with power and technical control; understanding as making rather than understanding as contemplation. However, that Boehme is here following out the implication of Trinitarian doctrine, would seem to be confirmed by much earlier instances of this sort of reasoning, most notably in John Scotus Eriugena. Eriugena, at certain points, inverts the Platonic model of knowledge by asserting that God cannot know things before he creates them; he knows in action, and knows completely in the infinite and internal creation which is the generation of the Son. As far as I can see this is almost the first instance of an explicitly 'pragmatist' theory of understanding. However, where the Trinity is reduced to moments of a single Geist, then here this 'knowledge as art' appears far more instrumental, and far more linked to the mere achievement of self-control and self-presence. By contrast the orthodox version seems to present knowledge as the positive seeking of difference and remaining with difference such that the creative generation of the product appears to merge with the contemplative apprehension of what the product ought to be.

This reflection suggests a more general appraisal of gnosticism of the Behmenist type. In a curious way it appears to penetrate aspects of the Christian mystery not always adequately explored by orthodoxy. In particular, like Jewish and Islamic esotericism, it strives to understand an embracing of differentiation, and a submitting to the tragic and contradictory possibility of a loss to the good of what essentially belongs to it—the 'pathos' of God by which he places himself in human hands—as God's normal mode of action, rather than as a special mode of action glimpsed only in the Incarnation. Likewise, redemptive atonement is grasped not just as something which happens once, but as something of which we are all agents. Yet it only does this at the price of submitting God to a fatalism which includes the necessity of evil and of his own redemption, and a quasi-pantheism which refuses ultimacy to the personal (or the inter-personal) and hands it over instead to the process in which the divine and the human are alike enmeshed. One sees here how there is a natural collaboration (and the same thing is true of Buddhism) between a mythicism that does not record within its own narratives its own self-limitation (as the narratives about a transcendent God in the Bible ceaselessly do) and a pure impersonalism which is then the only possible counter-balancing resource left to a negative theology. All this is really traceable to a refusal of the historic and concrete ultimacy of the Incarnation; here we see that process (while remaining structural) consists in personhood; here the promise of God's habitual mode of action is fulfilled, and alone adequately defined as a free and particular adoption of form, as a contingent and tragic submission to evil in order to subdue it and so resolve a contradiction that must affect even the absolute. Here we see the particular and definitive pattern and achievement of atonement which all may then imitate and pass on.

The trouble then, with Christian esotericism is that it has not fully grasped the radical implication of the Christian mysteries, although it has pointed in this direction. The case with Jewish and Islamic esotericism is somewhat different, for they are the register of a discontent with pure monotheism, a discontent that not only points in the Christian direction, but which also indicates the universality of the kenotic mode of divine action and of atonement as a way of ethical life in a manner that Christianity itself fails to grasp. Yet only Trinitarian orthodoxy will disclose the absolutely primordial and constitutive character of relation within God, and the fact that intra-divine difference and creative expression exists without self-estrangement.

Walsh fails to grasp this ambiguity of Christian gnosticism, but, despite this, his presentation does raise seriously the problem of its persistence. Theologians who read this book may find themselves asking two questions in particular. First of all, was the identification of modern protestant theology with gnosticism really broken with the coming of neo-orthodoxy? One will recall here Barth's evident pre-dilection for Boehme's ideas in dealing with the origins of evil, and it seems to me that shades of this persist in current theologians like Moltmann and Mackinnon who wish to press the Passion too totally back into the eternal life of the Godhead; the consequences here for ethics and religious psychology appear not altogether desirable. In addition, one must wonder whether such notions have entirely banished the Hegelian shadow of a *necessarily* alienating expressive differentiation. Similarly, Rahner and Jungel's theologies of the Trinity still present too much the myth of self-becoming spirit and not the absoluteness and finality of related difference, nor the 'attention' which the Father must pay to the Son—this being the very essence of his originative personhood, and his only mode of knowing and being.

While Moltmann, indeed, has attacked Rahner and Jungel on precisely the grounds of their residual Hegelianism, he goes so far in a tritheistic direction that he actually abandons the *taxis* or generative order of Trinitarian relations. For Moltmann, the persons may be taken in any order so that we no longer have any clue to the basis of their differentiation, and this appears as a pure surd element. Whereas the Augustinian understanding of the persons as 'subsistent relations' marked the absolute inconceivability of this mode of being, Moltmann makes the Trinity conceivable as myth, and yet projects this positivity upon the absolute. The paradox here is that Moltmann arrives back by an inverse route at a concept of the Trinity as the story of an evolutionary progress passed through by God and humanity alike (his chosen gnostic is Joachim of Fiore). So here again the positivization of personhood (which one should avoid even as regards humans who are persons only in their social, linguistic being) coincides with an implicit promotion of autonomous abstract process.

In Moltmann also the shadow of the conception of development as necessarily from a primitive and estranged, heteronomous imperfection to a final synthesis of good reappears. One should remember here that Church Fathers like Irenaeus and Gregory of Nyssa discovered the *absolute* (rather than contingent) possibility of development as the essence of perfection itself, a progress from glory to glory that does not identify immaturity with imperfection and fault. *Felix Culpa* and *In der Überwindung ist der Freude* have their truths, but are we not sometimes in danger of celebrating evil as the necessary prelude to a desirable profundity? (whether the Thomist or the Scotist versions of the ultimate basis of the Incarnation best prevent this is an interesting question).

The second question which theologians may want to put to themselves concerns the nature and genesis of the secular. Walsh is surely right to claim that a thinker like Boehme is really just as much an author of modernity as Bacon or Descartes. The really decisive shift in consciousness which helped to bring about modernity seems to have taken place only gradually, from the 12th century onwards, culminating in the early modern period. This was the increasing concern with human creativity and the significance of cultural (including technological) products. What is important to emphasise here is that this was *not* initially a secularization, that it must necessarily have been so is a part of the ideology by which the whole of secularism maintains itself.

The concern goes back to the 12th century; we have the Victorine elevation of the technical arts, and Hildegard's formulation of a metaphysical cosmology (in line with that of Eriugena) based not on Augustinian *reductio* within the internal apprehension of the spirit, nor on Aristotelian cosmological contemplation but on the recognition of God through acknowledgement of the divine *Virtus* in the cosmos and the participation in this *Virtus* through the life of charity. It is ethical, not artistic, activity that is envisaged, yet this is thought of on the Dionysian model of a constant return to the Father, and a renewed outgoing in the strength of his creative *logos*. In Hildegard also, mystical contemplation and artistic symbolization seem to have drawn into close connection, and this development was theoretically reinforced in the further elaboration of the patristic idea (still fundamental for Boehme) of 'the birth of Christ in the soul' in Hadewijch and Eckhardt (one certainly needs to explore the possible significance of female promotion of this maternal, affective and expressive dimension whose significance is not just in a realm of 'spirituality'!). For Eckhardt the drawing into the life of the Trinity is simultaneously a development of a 'linguistic' expression, an emanation of a *verbum mentis* from within our soul, a remaking of our self-image. This whole diffuse tendency is then greatly extended by Nicholas of Cusa who makes the search for God fundamentally a matter of *explicatio*, of a 'game' that we play through the whole sphere of our lives in linguistically and expressively expanding the field of our awareness. Cusanus stands already at the commencement of the Renaissance, yet his thought has to be seen as a culmination, as well as a transcendence of, a mediaeval development. Certainly the hermetic writings had already played a part in this, from the 12th century onwards, but their vision of human creative divinity appears to have been cautiously integrated. (It remains uncertain whether writings like the *Asclepius* are not already themselves influenced by Alexandrian Judaism, and so profoundly touched by biblical tradition.)

What one has to say then, is that a stress on immanent creativity was already well-rooted before its heretical expression in writers like Boehme. It is very much for this reason that Vico and Hamann are later able to develop a strikingly 'modern' historicist and constructivist philosophy within an orthodox framework that shows no trace of Hegelian-type gnosticism (in Vico the connection of Trinitarianism with a pragmatist theory of knowledge reappears). However, these thinkers (along perhaps with Coleridge) are exceptions, and stand out as a 'minority report' working within later Romanticism precisely because, on the whole, orthodoxy could not contain the theme of finite creativity. The tensions were too great; to preserve human creative freedom as rational exploration alongside Divine omnipotence one required some sort of understanding of making as itself a response to a divine prompting, a divine creative fullness, otherwise the sphere of human artifice inevitably came to mark out a region of arbitrary human autonomy, the sphere of the secular. Thus *Homo Creator* was formulated in increasingly heretical versions, limiting divine power, or else making it arbitrary and absolute and us its mere instruments. Therefore, we get the voluntarist celebrations of mechanical power as in Hobbes, or else the gnostic theories of *magia* and *natursprache* as in Boehme. In the former case we have a desacralizing of the mundane order under the sign of the technical, and in the latter a delimitation and partial appropriation of the power of God as magical routine.

The challenge, then, for theology remains that of understanding human expressive being as a locus of revelation, without loss of divine transcendence or omnipotence. This may mean re-capturing many themes from the gnostics. We should remember that Irenaeus only arrived at his historical and aesthetic theory of redemption as recapitulation, or the entering into and re-ordering of the estranged human image, by way of his polemic with the gnostic Valentinus who could be said to have presented such insights in distorted guise. It is often said that we should do to Marx what Aquinas did to Aristotle; without gainsaying such an aim, I would like to add that we must do to Hegel what Irenaeus did to Valentinus.

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Religion (1988) **18,** 95–100

REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion. Archaic to Classical* (translated by J. Raffan). Blackwell, Oxford, 1985.

Walter Burkert is not only the most learned living historian of Greek religion, he is also a speculative thinker of great ability and a gifted writer. Following upon the appearance of his Sather lectures, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley, 1979) in their original English form, and the translation of his *magnum opus* on sacrifice and sacrificial rituals, *Homo Necans* (Berkeley, 1983), the book under review—a translation of his masterly synthesis of Greek religion first published in German in 1977—now at last makes his spectacular research in this area accessible to the English reader. Burkert is essential reading for students of ancient Greek society, but his work is of wider importance, and should concern all those interested in the social functions of religion, as well as in the methodology of hermeneutic models of historical religious research.

Comparison with the standard work on the subject, volume one of Martin Nilsson's *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (first published in 1940), is inevitable and illuminating. Nilsson's book remains fundamental for its wealth of documentary detail. Its understanding of Greek religion is, however, severely limited by its dependence upon the subsequently much criticized anthropological theories of E. B. Tylor, J. G. Frazer and W. E. Mannhardt. 'Animism', 'totemism', 'mana', and 'primitive culture' are the keywords of this now largely discarded approach. Burkert's method reflects the development of religious research over the last 50 years. It is complex, using a variety of hermeneutic tools: sociology (he is the first scholar since Jane Harrison to apply, in a fully satisfactory manner, Durkheim's and other scholars' constructions in an analysis of the social functions of Greek religion, though Louis Gernet is an important forerunner); structural anthropology (following J. -P. Vernant and others, but tempering their insights with an acute sense of the historical development of society and ritual); ethology (the influence of Konrad Lorenz's study of animal aggression upon Burkert's interpretation of sacrifice is a notable instance); psychoanalysis (following, e.g. E. R. Dodds); and folklore (Karl Meuli is an influential precursor). Thus Burkert's history is eminently one for the present day: whether it will seem quite so sophisticated and persuasive 50 years hence will depend upon the progress in the several sciences which he applies. The very variety of his approach, and his sure command of the literary, linguistic, and archaeological evidence, should, however, ensure his work's long survival.

The book has many of the features of the typical history of religion. Despite its concentration on the Archaic and Classical periods (700–450 B.C.), it provides a valuable, up-to-date survey of the Minoan and Mycenaean evidence (incorporating material that was not available when the German original appeared, such as the evidence for human sacrifice in Cretan Arkhanes in the 17th century B.C.). It has sections on oracles, hero-cult, burial customs, and on the individual deities of the Greek pantheon. But it is at once more, and less, than a mere reference work. The evocative sections on animal sacrifice (II.1) and the Anthesteria (V.2.4), for example, depend upon Burkert's highly original interpretations in *Homo Necans*—interpretations which are cerebral and daring, but are far removed from the cautious limitations, and insistence upon the 'known facts', of the average handbook. In an area where established facts are few and far between, and where late evidence must be applied to early practices, Burkert's constructions may be the only worthwhile approach to interpreting the origins of rituals which the Greeks of the historical period no longer understood, and whose explanation is undoubtedly to be found in prehistory. The most rewarding parts of the book are those in which he is most original: on the complex role of religion in the Greek polis (V), and the typology of rituals (II).

The translation is competent, and the production (with illustrations—absent from the German original—well-chosen, if few in number) elegant; but the consignment of the notes to the end of the book, especially when it is combined with the author's tendency to refer to his sources in a way that makes consultation of both his abbreviations and his bibliography a constant necessity, is an error of editorial judgement that computer-age book-production has surely made superfluous. Thus consultation of Burkert, like that of oracles, is often cumbersome. But it is always immensely worthwhile, which is more than can be said of some oracles. He demonstrates that, in order to begin to understand the religion of the ancient Greeks, all relevant human sciences, as well as the application of non-Hellenic cultural evidence and the use of the imagination, are necessary prerequisites: Jane Harrison would have been delighted with him.

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Nathan Katz, *Buddhist Images of Human Perfection: The Arahant of the Sutta Pitaka compared with the Bodhisattva and the Mahāsiddha*. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1982, pp. xix + 320. Rs. 100.

The most important contribution of this book is its presentation of material that can be used as a basis for future research into 'the dynamic structure of the history of Buddhist thought' (p. 286). It does this by a verbal, contextual analysis of the arahant ideal as presented in the Pali Canon. The title is somewhat misleading, because its scope is much broader than that of the book. The Pali Canon arahant is definitely centre stage. There are scattered references to the Bodhisattva, but these are controlled by arahant issues, and there are only seven pages (pp. 279–285) on the Mahāsiddha, added as if an afterthought.

Chapter III, 'The Arahant and the Buddha', seems to me to be the most significant chapter. Katz's conclusion is 'that the Buddha and the *ubhatabhāqavimutto* arahant are indistinguishable, and that, in terms of *āsavakkhaya*, he is identical to the *paññāvimutto* arahant *as well*' (p. 146, italics original). The argument towards this conclusion is carefully prepared. First, the distinction between the *paññāvimutto* arahant, who is liberated by the destruction of the *āsavas*, and the *ubhatabhāgavimutto* arahant, who is liberated by the mastery of *jhānā* in addition to *āsavakkhaya*, is clarified (pp. 78–83). Passages in the Tipitaka are then adduced to show that the Buddha's dual attainment of both *jhānā* mastery and *āsavakkhaya* make him superior to *paññāvimutto* arahants, but he is superior to *ubhatabhāqavimutto* arahants only in regard to his being the first to achieve it. The Mahāyāna viewpoint that a Buddha is superior to *any* arhat is claimed to be a mistake, a re-definition (p. 118) based upon Sarvāstivādin teachings which are accused of 'conceptual backsliding' (p. 98).

The issue of the Buddha's omniscience (*sabbaññā*) is investigated and found to be identical with that of the arahant, i.e. both have *sabbaññā* restricted to the *tevijja*(knowledge of former lives, of the working of *kamma*, and of *āsavakkhaya*), and neither have total knowledge of everything (pp. 132–140). Both are teachers, and the Mahāyāna view that the arhat does not teach is not found in the Tipitaka (p. 120). This last statement betrays a limitation in Katz's use of the term Mahāyāna: by it he means the Tibetan tradition, especially the Gelugpa. Sino-Japanese Mahāyāna is not examined. In this case, for instance, the (eccentric but actual) teaching of the *lo-han,* based upon texts such as the *Ssŭ-shih-êrh Chang Ching*, seems to be quite different from any arhat activity described in the Tibetan texts, and closer to the Mahāsiddha ideal.

The problem of *sabbaññā* needs further investigation. Katz shows that the Pali Canon Buddha has perfect knowledge of teaching method (p. 138) but not of absolutely everything. It is precisely the Mahāyānist point that a Buddha *does* know everything in a single moment (what the Tendai Shū calls *ichinen-sanzen*) and that the Hīnayānists are mistaken in their claim that a Buddha knows everything only *seriatim*, i.e. only when and if he turns his mind to it (Hopkins, 1984: 122). Although Katz quotes Pali refutations of the existence of a totally omniscient being, he fails to address the later Indian Mahāyāna distinction between *sarvajña* (one who knows all that is necessary, like a Tipitaka Buddha) and *sarvasarvajña* (one who knows absolutely everything). Moksākaragupta shows that the latter is possible, although he agrees that such a one is not of great practical importance (Kajiyama, 1966: section 29.1). Katz's proof, then, appears to support the position he is denying.

In this connection, the word 'human' in Katz's title begs the question at issue. A human is a *satta/sattva* and as such is bound to *samsāra*, and a Buddha is not. In *Lalitavistara* 409, when the five renegade disciples address the Buddha as *Āyusman Gautama*, he sharply rebukes them: 'Do not, bhiksus, call the Tathāgata by the [human] title "Āyusmat" (*āyusmadvādena*) . . . lest you spend a long night [re-born] in the unhappy realms . . .' and Jayatilleke (1975: 105) maintains that the Buddha was never regarded as 'a mere human being' in either Mahāyāna *or* Theravāda.

The claim that the arahant and the Buddha are alike in wisdom is paralleled by the claim that the arahant and the bodhisattva have the same compassion. Once again, many Pali texts are brought forward to show the extensive social involvement of the arahant, and these surely (and sorely) need to be studied more than they have been to offset the 'cold, unfeeling monk' image which has bedevilled Theravādin studies (especially that of Melford Spiro, against which Katz protests, pp. 173 ff.), but the precision of the Mahāyāna objection is again missed. Having demonstrated the compassion of the arahant in the modality of the four *brahmavihāras* (p. 265), Katz quotes the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* to the effect of 'benefitting *inconceivable, innumerable* sentient beings' (*ibid.*, italics mine) and fails to observe what he has quoted. The Mahāyāna never denies that the Hīnayāna shows compassion, it claims that this compassion is great but less than complete—and indeed if one passes into *nibbāna* before even one other *satta*, how could it not be? The further quotation (p. 266) from Kong.sprul is then irrelevant. If '*byams.pa (maitrī)* '. . . is different in degree but not in kind from . . . *bodhicitta*' then the Pali *mettā* is suspect of limitation. Katz immediately tries to defend the limitlessness of the Pali *mettā* by a reference to the *Suttanipāta* (p. 266, note 20), but the issue is too important to be lost in a footnote. Katz may indeed be correct in equating Theravādin *mettā* with Mahāyānist *mahākarunā*, but he needs to address the question at much greater length in order to convince us.

Throughout the book, Katz presents material for examining the connection between Mahāyāna, Hīnayāna and Theravāda which I find valuable and thought-provoking, but inconclusive. He claims that the Mahāyāna *siddhāntas* (in itself, be it noted, a loaded term because it clearly relates to the familiar Tibetan *grub.pa* but its circumlocutory Chinese equivalents are rarely found) can be traced back to the Pali Canon (p. 203) and tries to prove this by, to take one example, showing that Theravādin freedom from *ditthi* is the same as Mahāyāna *śūnyatā* (pp. 224–228). This again is imprecise, since Tsongkhapa (for example) allows a gross *śūnyatā* to other *siddhāntas* while claiming that only in his *siddhānta* of Prāsangika Mādhyamika is the last refuge of extremely subtle *svabhāva* destroyed. That something is awry here is shown by Katz's example 'No one is in the office' (p. 225). He claims that this is 'the kind of negation found in Buddhism' (ibid.) and so it may be, in *some* Buddhism, but it is an affirming negative *(ma.yin.dgag)* not the full-blown non-affirming negative (*med.dgag*), which B. K. Matilal has called an illocutionary negation of the form 'I do not promise to come' (Cheng, 1962: xii–xiii), and which is needed to establish *śūnyatā*. Although Katz has shown that (at least some) Mahāyāna *siddhāntas* are present in the Tipitaka, he has shown that they are present *in germ* and not *in their fullness*, thus once again supporting, against his intentions, the Tibetan 'Heilsgeschichte' of the *Triyāna*.

More easy to accept is his view that, the titles of certain well-known Buddhological works notwithstanding, there is no 'central philosophy' in Buddhism, and that its philosophical history is that of repeated corrections against one-sided interpretations. This view has already been suggested by Guenther (1974: 193 ff.), but it has not been taken very seriously. A dynamic view of the Buddhist *sāsana*, which itself sees everything samsāric as dynamic, would seem to be eminently appropriate. Such an approach would banish once and for all the neo-Protestant prejudice of many early western scholars of Theravāda that there is somewhere to be found a pure Gospel of Buddha. However, because the Buddha spoke at all, he must have meant *something*, and unless there is something like a something there cannot be any history of correctives against one-sided interpretations of it.

Katz appears to suggest that this something is psychological rather than philosophical (pp. xvi, 148, 287, *et passim*), that is, when the Buddha said 'Such and such is the case' he meant 'Such and such is the case for *you*, my dear chap, but as for what's *really* going on, mum's the word'. This is an enormously interesting approach, and it needs a separate book. If someone says 'The world is a vast, impersonal machine, and I'm a little spark of randomly arisen consciousness lost within it' a philosopher might take the words at face value, but a psychologist would enquire about the speaker's mental health. Morris Berman's diagrams comparing the Cartesian universe of mind-body interaction with R. D. Laing's model of schizoid interaction (Berman, 1984: 6, 22), which allows him to claim that Cartesian philosophy is inherently neurotic, is mischievous, wicked, and thoroughly convincing. Psychologists are now beginning to wonder about the connection between modes of thought and 'worlds' (Bruner, 1986). I would suggest that Buddhism is not quite as un-philosophical as Katz claims, but rather that is has an as yet ill-described 'soft' philosophy rather than the 'hard' philosophy of, for example, Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

In general, then, I find this book extremely important as a *resource* for what it tries to do, but I think it tries to do too much. It would have been better if Katz could have reined himself in and written *just* about the arahant in the Tipitaka. His contextual method is good and effective. Yet even here some mention must be made of the appalling absence of redaction criticism in Buddhist textual studies in general, and an attempt must be made to begin such criticism or compensate for its lack. It will no longer do to gather together a posy of quotations from all over the Canon, like Luther interpreting the Bible by means of itself, as if everything were the Buddha's *ipsissima verba* and, moreover, all spoken to the same audience during the same strenuous afternoon. Katz's suggestion of dynamic self-correction indeed precludes this exegetical method.

This is a valuable book for specialists, but it is an unfinished one. Non-Buddhologists will not find it very accessible. The reader who is pressed for time will find Katz's main ideas in his 'Conclusions' (pp. 258–287).

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Surat al-Baqarah, *Man in Qur'an and the Meaning of Furqan*. Commentary by Shaykh Fadhalla Haeri. Zahra Publications, distributed through Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1982, pp. 210.

This book is one of a projected series of commentaries on the Qur'an, several of which have already appeared (see below). The brief biographical data provided on the commentator and the foreword by Prof. Mahmoud Ayoub of the University of Toronto's Center for Religious Studies indicate the purpose of the series. Born in Karbala, Iraq, Haeri is a shaykh of the Sufi order Jafariyya-Shadhiliyya, a fascinating, but rather ahistorical and idiosyncratic modern amalgamation of Sunni and Shi'a mystical traditions. Haeri operates at present from his California based American Institute of Qur'anic Studies which he established in 1981. The Institute is dedicated to making the Qur'an accessible and relevant to men and women of the 20th century who may wish to be guided by it in their daily lives and their spiritual quest. The intent is clearly to speak to an audience beyond the small but growing Muslim community of North America; the commentary is addressed to all, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. The methodological tools employed are the traditional *tafsir* or exegesis of historical Islamic scholarship modified with an eye to the contemporary reader and *ta'wil* the inner meaning of the holy text provided by the reflections of Shaykh Haeri himself on the conditions of our age.

The text of the book is a verse-by-verse presentation, first of the Arabic text, printed in handsome gold-coloured calligraphic characters, followed by a translation in English and then the commentary proper. The translated material is a clear and simple rendering of the original.

The commentary which forms the bulk of the book is, on the other hand, disappointing. This is in no way to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the enterprise itself, but merely a comment on the quality of the execution. Indeed, the great 11th century Sunni religious thinker, al-Ghazali, wrote a vigorous defence of the Sufi interpretation of the Qur'an. This first entailed a mastery of the 'outward' or surface exegesis of the text based upon a sound knowledge of the rules of grammar and a firm grasp of the corpus of the earlier exegetic tradition of the community. This was the precondition to a knowledge of the deep, inner meaning of the Qur'an obtained through long study, contemplation and finally an intuition founded upon a purity of the soul. Haeri's commentary, however, is based far more on his own *ta'wil* rather than traditional *tafsir* and thus reads rather like an astrologer's bundle of platitudinous daily forecasts for each of the star signs; they could be juggled around in a different order without anyone being the wiser. The result appears close to what Prof. Elwell-Sutton, more than a decade ago, called the works of Sufi popularizer Idris Shah: pseudosufism.

On a more positive note it might repay the reader's time to compare these volumes of Haeri with that of the Egyptian religious-political activist Sayyid Qutb, who was executed in 1966. His *In the Shade of the Qur'an* (Vol. 30) covers the same chapters of the Qu'ran as Haeri's *Beams of Illumination from the Divine Revelation* (1985; publication data as above). Two very different approaches both inspired by the desire to demonstrate the relevance of the Qu'ran to the daily lives and condition of contemporary Muslims and their societies. Two other volumes of Haeri's commentary which have been published are entitled *The Mercy of Qur'an and the Advent of Zaman* (1984) covering four chapters and *Heart of Qur'an and Perfect Mizan* (1983) dealing with chapter Ya Sin.

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MONASTICISM, UTOPIAS AND COMPARATIVE SOCIAL THEORY

340408

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This paper attempts to criticise and develop Louis Dumont's argument concerning the religious origins of modern western individualism. He continues and refines some insights and terminology of Max Weber, speaking of the 'outworldly individual' of 'world-renouncing' asceticism and monasticism. A comparison of Christian and (Theravāda) Buddhist monasticism shows the centrality of celibacy (= being unmarried) in the cross-cultural sociological perception of what it is to be a monk. The monk expresses his essentially individual nature in the virtue of self-sufficiency, and his social existence in that of friendship. The concluding section suggests that the 'ideal society' of monastic individuals has provided—in the western tradition of social and political thought, but *not* in the Buddhist and Indian—a paradigm for thought about society as a whole, and that this is the way in which monastic individualism has affected modern thought.

LOUIS DUMONT AND THE IDEA OF WORLD-RENUNCIATION

There can be no doubt that Louis Dumont has done more than any other Indologist in recent years to bring the study of India to the attention of a wider audience in social science and the history of ideas. In what follows I shall criticize his writing on a number of points: but I must make it clear that if I wish—as I see it—to qualify his conclusions and hypotheses, then this is done in a spirit of admiration, and of gratitude for his pioneering scholarship. The issue I wish to address is his attempt to use comparative material from the Indian tradition as a means of understanding those characteristics in our own society which go under the catch-all label of individualism.[1] I take the following quotations from his recent essay 'A modified view of our origins: the Christian beginnings of modern individualism';[2] but the theme has been prominent in his work for over two decades. He writes:

> when we speak of man as an individual, we designate two concepts at once: an object out there, and a value. Comparison obliges us to distinguish analytically these two aspects; one, the *empirical* subject of speech, thought, and will, the individual sample of mankind, as found in all societies; and, two, the independent, autonomous, and thus essentially non-social moral being, who carries our paramount values and is found primarily in our modern ideology of man and society. From that point of view, there emerge two kinds of societies. Where the individual is a paramount value I speak of individualism. In the opposite case, where the paramount value lies in society as a whole, I speak of holism. (p. 94).

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Dumont sees holism in India as residing in the social world of caste, while individualism remains outside that world in what he calls 'world-renunciation':

> The renouncer is self-sufficient, concerned only with himself. His thought is similar to that of the modern individual, but for one basic difference: we live in the social world, he lives outside it. I therefore called the Indian renouncer an individual-outside-the-world. Comparatively, we are individuals-in-the-world, *inworldly* individuals, while he is an *outworldly* individual. The renouncer may live in solitude as a hermit or may join a group of fellow-renouncers under a master-renouncer, who propounds a particular discipline of liberation. The similarity with Western anchorites and between, say, Buddhist and Christian monasteries, can go very far (p. 95).

Notice that here Dumont explicitly contrasts two examples of a very specific kind of religious figure: the anchorite or monk. In his general comparative accounts, however, the terms are used of all early Christians. Thus, 'I submit that something of modern individualism is present with the first Christians and in the surrounding world' (p. 94), and at the same time, 'the first Christians were, all in all, nearer to the Indian renouncer than to ourselves' (p. 101). Although the surrounding Hellenistic world had prepared for this, with the Stoic, Epicurean and Cynic ideal of 'the wise man detached from social life' (p. 97), the basis for it is theological:

> There is no doubt about the fundamental conception of man that flowed from the teaching of Christ: as Troeltsch said, man is an *individual-in-relation-to-God*: for our purposes this means that man is in essence an outworldly individual (p. 96).
>
> Sociologically speaking, the emancipation of the individual through a personal transcendence, and the union of outworldly individuals in a community that treads on earth but has its heart in heaven, may constitute a passable formula for Christianity (p. 99).

Whereas in India, he thinks, the original bifurcation between holism and individualism remains wedded to the social dichotomy between the man-in-the-world and the world-renouncer, in the West, thanks above all to the gradual coalescence of Church and State, the 'paramount value' of outworldly individualism begins to usurp 'the antithetical worldly element' in Christian values,

> until finally the heterogeneity of the world disappears entirely. Then the whole field [is] unified, holism [has] vanished from ideology, and life in the world [is] thought of as entirely conformable to the supreme value, the outworldly individual [has] become the modern, inworldly individual (p. 100).

Although in some ways this process may still be going on, a kind of summation was reached with the Reformation, and in particular with Calvin.

Now, these are clearly very large claims: the canvas is being painted with large brush-strokes. There are, not surprisingly, many ambiguities and qualifications to be noted: for example, in the Indian case, the conflation of the (various sorts of) Hindu 'renouncer' and the Buddhist monk masks some important and relevant sociological differences. On the Christian side, although the religious concept of 'the world' and attitudes towards it are present from the earliest times, 'world-renouncing' monasticism proper is usually thought only to have begun in the late 3rd- and early 4th-centuries with Saints Anthony, Pachomius and others, a long time after the 'first Christians'.

What exactly is the 'world' which is being spoken of here? Dumont nowhere defines the term in his writings, but depends, explicitly, on Weber and Troeltsch. In his *Sociology of Religion*,[3] Weber said:

> Concentration upon the actual pursuit of salvation may entail a formal withdrawal from the 'world': from social and psychological ties with the family, from the possession of worldly goods, and from political, economic, artistic, and erotic activities—in short, from all creaturely interests.

In Troeltsch's *Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*[4] we read

> the term 'the world' came to be regarded as a synonym for all those social institutions of life outside the Church . . . [and] . . . The Church pointed out that the 'world' in itself is not evil; it has only become so through the Fall, and it is only under the power of the demons so long as it is sinful. It is certainly everywhere steeped in sin, and forms a coherent system of sin, a sociological counterpart of the Church . . . Christians themselves, however, do not live directly within the world, but only through the medium of the Church.

While I do not deny that these words may have a general sense which is, at least conversationally, applicable to Indian materials, it seems clear that this idea of 'the world' is a blend of Christian theology and sociological description, which cannot function precisely when dealing with non-Christian materials (and perhaps not even for Christianity itself from a historical point of view). That it has so often been used for this purpose is one more example of what I see as the mistake, to borrow some terms of art from anthropology, of using the emic categories of Christian thought as if they were etic categories of description and analysis in the academic study of religions. (Perhaps the most pervasive example of this is the concept of 'religion' itself.)

Before going on to suggest that there indeed *is* a universal constant which we can use here, let me briefly review the senses of 'world' in Christian thought, and contrast them with what it is that renouncers are said to leave, in Hinduism and Buddhism. In early Christianity one may—very roughly—schematize the following senses of 'the world':[5]

(i) (from the Hebrew-Aramaic background) the present age, as opposed to a future age of salvation, on this earth and/or in heaven;
(ii) (from the Greek background) this material/spatial universe, as opposed to a heaven, immaterial or otherwise;

(iii) a variety of psychological/theological senses—(from the Patristic Greek Dictionary, s.v. *kosmos*) 'life according to the flesh', 'a sphere of evil and opposed to God', 'mankind considered as alienated from God', and so on. St Basil writes in the 4th-century 'The Gospel calls "the world" not the system of sky and earth, but this perishable life, subject to innumerable changes . . . the world, that is to say, a life enslaved to the passions of the flesh';

(iv) when these more general, metaphorical notions are located in a specific social group, the sense of the social world of (a) non-Christians, and (b) non-monastics, whether Christian or not.

Neither of these last social locations of 'the world', however, is necessarily present when texts speak of it: even in the case of monastic rejection of 'the world', what is meant is often, perhaps usually, merely an intensified form of the general or metaphorical sense of the term when used of all Christians.

In Hinduism, renunciation (*sannyāsa*) is defined essentially in terms of ritual; by which I mean the specific and prescribed socioreligious forms of 'significant action', *karma*, which make up (literally, indeed) the social cosmos of caste *dharma*.[6] The late (17/18th-century) text *Yatidharmaprakāśa* defines it thus: 'Renunciation is the abandonment of the *śrauta* and *smarta* rites [i.e. those derived from the literatures of revelation and tradition, respectively]—permanent, occasional and optional, which are known through injunctions [i.e. from Vedic literature]'.[7] This renunciation often has a specific social location as the last of the four 'stages of life' (*āśrama*), following those of celibate studentship, householder and forest-dweller. Even within this 'paradigm of asceticism', there are many complexities: whether the four stages form a series or a collection of alternatives, how far they are a Brahmanical rationalization of the originally contradictory and always dangerous phenomenon of ascetical opting-out of caste *dharma*, and so on. Important new work, as yet unpublished, by Lynn Teskey, shows that there are at least two other 'paradigms of asceticism': permanent celibacy, (*naisthika brahmacārya*) either bypassing the householder stage altogether or adopted from within it, and the many and complex forms of tantric asceticism.[8] In the case of permanent celibacy, which is already recognized in the earliest *dharmasūtra* literature,[9] and which is widespread in contemporary India, *karma*—considered both as the ensemble of caste duties and relations and as the metaphysical force of action generally—is still operative, whereas it is not in the state of *sannyāsa* in the four-*āśrama* model. In the case of tantric asceticism, which Teskey calls the *nāthpanth* paradigm, *karma* is also still operative, but it is used in a very different way. The tantric completely overturns the usual values of purity and pollution characteristic of caste *dharma*, seeking out the most impure things and actions possible, in order to manipulate them for magical powers (*siddhi*) or as an expression of a particular view of liberated consciousness.[10] Although both these types of ascetic 'world-rejection' are still related in one way or another to the rituals of caste *dharma*, Dumont's simple dichotomy between the man-in-the-world and the world-renouncer will not do descriptive justice to the facts of Hinduism. It does do justice to the facts of Buddhism, however, at least in its early, and later Theravāda forms, and it is the specific comparison between (Theravāda) Buddhism and Christianity which will concern me here. Dumont, I think, like so many others, simply conflates the two rather different cases of Hinduism and Buddhism; so much so, in fact, that he can write 'Buddhism truly expresses the place of the individual in Indian society.[11]

In Buddhism, there is a dichotomy, *lokiya/lokuttara*, which can be translated as 'worldly'/'superworldly', and which does parallel in certain ways the social dichotomy of layman/monk. Moreover, the notions of the world, *loka*, and what is worldly are used in a variety of ways which bear close resemblance to the Christian psychological or spiritual uses of the term as things to be abandoned and avoided; that is, sense (iii) as given above.[12] However, the notion is never, to my knowledge, used as a description of that which is abandoned when leaving the lay life for that of the monk. Here the ubiquitous idea is of 'leaving home for homelessness'. I have tried elsewhere to show how this imaginative dichotomy is used in Buddhism to express behavioural, psychological and metaphysical values from the most ordinary to the most refined levels of speculation.[13] There is common ground with Hinduism: the sacred fire of the hearth is a central focus in discussions of renunciation there, and much of orthodox Brahmanical opposition to anything within Hinduism other than the gradual, all-four-stages-of life, one-at-a-time view of renunciation is the same as its opposition to Buddhist renunciation (although there are obviously other grounds for the latter). The Hindu renouncer is regularly said to be 'homeless'.[14] However, nowhere in all this do I see any genuine sociological constant which can give a precise fulcrum on which to balance cross-cultural reflections about 'world-renunciation'.

One important reason, I think, why it can seem as if we are dealing straightforwardly with variant examples of a single phenomenon, is the frequency with which certain mutually-analogous 'geographical' notions are found here, as descriptions of the way in which the aspiring monk 'leaves society'. By this I mean, for example:

(i) in India and in medieval Europe, leaving the village for the forest;[15]
(ii) in Egypt and in previous Judaic tradition, leaving the town for the desert;[16]
(iii) in Classical Greece and in later Eastern Christianity, leaving the (inhabited) lowlands for the mountain.[17]

In all these cases, the idea is that withdrawing from the first to the second is a way of withdrawing from social life to a life of solitude, and this is certainly often part of the way in which an ascetic vocation is understood within the systems themselves. But for analytical and historical purposes, these ideas cannot be taken over. We might just as well use the figure of the cowboy riding off into the sunset as an interpretative device for the social history of early American settlement. (I use a cinematic example deliberately: for these metaphors of 'leaving society' seem to me to be essentially *visual* images.) From a sociological point of view, obviously enough, religious figures do not leave society, but merely exchange one social position for another; often, indeed, towards a much more conspicuous and involved one. In all traditions, what Peter Brown has described in the early Christian (Syrian) context as the 'ritual of dissociation' produced by asceticism and other things, has the effect of creating and maintaining a new social role rather than abandoning all such roles.[18] It is also important to stress here that, although religious traditions use these imagistic and metaphorical notions of 'leaving society', they are well aware that they need not be literal descriptions. In both Buddhist and early Christian thought, for example, terms which literally describe a spatial or geographical change are said to refer more properly to a psychological or spiritual one. In Buddhism *viveka* ('solitude'), *nekkhamma* ('renunciation' or 'leaving'), and *anagāriyā* ('homelessness');[19] and in Christianity *anachōrēsis* ('withdrawal' or 'renunciation'), *hēsuchia* ('solitude', 'quiet' or simply 'hesychasm'), and *erēmia* ('the desert'),[20] are all said to refer ultimately or really to an inner renunciation or detachment, to which physical or social location is irrelevant.[21]

Now, such notions of an interior 'withdrawal into the wilderness' obviously lead to a privatizing or individualizing of religious values and goals, and this brings us back to Dumont. I consider that, despite the queries I have raised so far, there is something important in his stress on the individuality of the renouncer; and I do think that we might try, as an hypothesis, to connect this with the presence in much of western social thought of an emphasis on individualism, compared with the relative absence of such emphasis in the Indian and Buddhist cases. But what is the common factor which gives substance to the idea of the individualism of the renouncer, and what is it that differentiates between the social thought of the two traditions in this connection?

MONKS, SINGLENESS AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

There is a conventional story about the origins of Christian monasticism and the word 'monk', found in dictionary definitions, and which I quote here from C. H. Lawrence's otherwise excellent book, *Medieval Monasticism* (1984). The first chapter, which has the typically romantic-legendary title 'The Call of the Desert', opens:

> The history of Christian monasticism begins in the Middle East. It made its earliest appearance in Egypt and Palestine towards the end of the third century. In its primitive form it was a way of life adopted by solitaries, or anchorites, living in the desert. The word 'monk' itself derives from the Greek word *monos*, meaning alone. Monks were people who had withdrawn from society to pursue the spiritual life in solitude. As Jerome, one of the early Western converts to the monastic life, wrote to another convert, Paulinus of Nola, in the year 395, 'If you wish to perform the office of a priest, live in cities and townships, and make the salvation of others the gain of your soul. But if you desire to be what is called a monk, that is a solitary, what are you doing in cities, which are after all the dwelling places not of solitaries but of the many?' Some monks, the greater number in fact, lived in organized communities of their own kind; but the first in time were the hermits.[22]

Recent scholarship has shown the etymology to be mistaken; and we must also reject, I believe, the legendary origin of monasticism in specifically eremitical anchoritism, although the legend is almost as old as monasticism itself.

In fact, as is shown *inter alia*, by evidence from papyrus finds, and by early texts and translations in and between Hebrew, Syriac and Greek, the meaning of the Greek word *monachos*, from which Latin *monachus* and English 'monk' are derived, is not 'alone' but 'single' in the ordinary modern English sense of 'unmarried'. Naturally, there is an immediate—though not logically necessary—connection between the social status of singleness and the idea of a non-sexual, chaste life-style.[23] In the history of Christian asceticism, the phenomenon of women, and later men, living together in urban settings, consecrating themselves to a life of virginity is very early indeed; and a development of this in Syria, where people called (in Greek) *monachoi* came together both physically and spiritually in a 'covenant' (*Qyama*), certainly predates the eremitism of the Egyptian desert in the 3rd- and 4th-centuries.[24]

Fundamentally, then, what defines a *monachos* is the fact of remaining unmarried, or leaving the married state, and living a life of consecrated celibacy. From this derive other senses of a monk's 'singleness'. He is *single-minded*, both in the simple sense of having but one task and aim, as opposed to the multiplicity of such in ordinary (and essentially family) life, and also in the more mystical and devotional sense of an experiential closeness to or union with God. This inner unity and celibacy makes him perfectly *one*, like Christ (who was an adult, male, but unmarried Jew, an unusual state as we tend to forget), like Adam before the creation of Eve, and like the angels in heaven.[25] Although to be *monachos* in this sense might be said to be 'outside society' in the non-spatial and metaphorical sense of not having a place in the public network of reproductive–kinship relations, it is certainly not equivalent to being solitary in the eremitical sense. The centrality of the eremitical aspect in our view of early Christian monasticism is due, amongst other things, to the enormous influence of St Athanasius' life of St Anthony, which rather stresses this more 'sensational' part of his life (though close reading shows, I think, that it is not essential) and to accounts of the early ascetics in Latin, where this aspect was also emphasized. St Jerome, who was quoted earlier, was an important influence here; but as the Benedictines of the United States have recently shown in their translation and commentary on the Rule of St Benedict, despite what they call '[Jerome's] own devotion (theoretical rather than practical) to the eremitic ideal', he was quite aware in other contexts of 'the broader original sense' of the word.[26] The traditional etymology for 'monk' is, in fact, every bit as un-historical as that given by St Augustine, when he derives the 'singleness' of the *monachus* from the single-minded and perfect unity of the monastic community, quoting a famous communitarian passage from the Acts of the Apostles, to which I shall return.[27]

Although in the case of Buddhism such a sense of singleness cannot be derived from the word *bhikkhu*, usually translated 'monk' but meaning literally 'beggar', an identical ideal can nonetheless be discerned. Historically, the earliest Buddhist monks seem to have led, for the most part, a wandering rather than settled life, but this is not equivalent to an eremitical rather than cenobitical lifestyle, for the obvious reason that it is possible to wander *in groups*. The monks belonged to a *sangha*, a community, both ideologically and in fact, and although physical aloneness was possible—in certain measure—it was by no means the regular condition.[28] There is certainly a strong emphasis on the ideal of the monk who 'wanders alone' (*eko carati*), and one early poem, very well-known both to Buddhists and to scholars, dramatizes this by comparing the monk to the single horn of the rhinoceros.[29] The first verses are:

> 1 Laying aside violence in respect of all beings, not harming even one of them, one should not wish for a son, let alone a companion. One should wander solitary as a rhinoceros horn.
>
> 2 Affection comes into being for one who has associations; following on affection, this misery arises. Seeing the peril (which is) born from affection, one should wander solitary as a rhinoceros horn.
>
> 3 Sympathising with friends (and) companions one misses one's goal, being shackled in mind. Seeing the danger in acquaintance (with friends), one should wander solitary as a rhinoceros horn.

However, as other verses from the same poem and the commentary on it show, it is not necessary to be physically alone, so long as suitable companions can be found. The commentary to the first verse explains that there are a number of ways of 'wandering solitary', the first of which consists simply in the act of becoming a monk, by the ritual of 'going forth' (*pabbajjā*) or ordination. In this sense, it says, a monk is alone 'even in the middle of a thousand other ascetics', because he has by means of ordination 'cut off the fetters of the household life'.[30] This sense of 'being alone' is coupled with another, 'being alone by abandoning the (religious) group' and living in the forest, in the commentarial exegesis of another poem in the same collection, which straightforwardly and without further elaboration contrasts 'wandering alone' with having sexual relations.[31] The point is, of course, that regardless of whether one lives physically alone or not, it is mental detachment from what are seen as the 'defilements',[32] and specifically the condition of physical and mental chastity, of which the former, but not the latter, is given by the fact of ordination, which constitute true aloneness. Elsewhere, the phrase 'without a companion' is regularly interpreted to mean 'without desire', on the grounds that if a monk goes off to a life of forest solitude taking desire along with him, he is not then living alone, but lives 'with desire as a companion'; and conversely, if he is without desire, then he lives 'alone' even with others.[33]

This is not only a matter of psychological or spiritual evaluation: total isolation for a Buddhist monk, even if it were practically possible, is in fact prohibited by the rules of monastic Discipline (*Vinaya*), because he is forbidden to collect and cook his own food.[34] Not only is he thus in principle completely dependent on the material support of laypeople—this cannot be stressed too highly as a contrast to the Christian case—but he must also come into frequent actual contact with them, either by going to their houses for alms, or remaining in a remote place and receiving their gifts there (usually, it must be said, in even greater amounts than the ordinary monk).[35]

Just as in Christianity, the social status of singleness is connected with various forms of psychological and mystical singleness, so the social 'solitariness' of a Buddhist monk is connected both with psychological detachment in general and in particular with the increasing 'one-pointedness of mind' which characterizes progress in meditative concentration.[36]

It is this singleness, this individuality, then, which I contend is the sociological constant we need to make Dumontian comparisons between different kinds of 'world-renouncing' monastic asceticism. Sociologically, the (ideal-typical) monastic renouncer is one whose formal status is that of dissociation from the 'world' of inter-connected reproductive-kinship relations and obligations.[37] Such a person is not only an empirically individual body, as everyone is, but is also construed ideologically as an—at least potentially—independent and autonomous individual, by virtue of this dissociation and the various ideals of single-mindedness, inner unification and freedom which it makes possible.

Closely related to all this is another ideal of monasticism, 'self-sufficiency'. Like the singleness of the monk, this is something we can trace directly in the Christian case, in the Greek term *autarkeia* and indirectly, by comparison, in Buddhism. The ideal of *autarkeia* has a long pre-Christian history in Classical and Hellenistic Greek thought.[38] The general notion is that virtue (or wisdom—sometimes the two are coalesced) is sufficient for happiness; from this two inferences can be drawn. First, the wise/virtuous man does not need *anything* other than virtue/wisdom. Thus he is indifferent to material comforts and luxuries, even though he may not necessarily reject them. Apart from a few conceptual skirmishes about how far this was conceivable (even Diogenes the Cynic, it was argued, needed a leather-cutter for his wallet, a woodcutter for his staff, and a weaver for his cloak—these being the three emblems of his Cynic lifestyle[39]) normally this came to refer to the ideal of a simple life of reduced needs and desires. It was often coupled with arcadian idylls of the simple life, and with speculative-utopian constructions of ideal communities of the wise/virtuous, who only want what they genuinely need (and get). This was undoubtedly the most important sense of the term in early Christianity.[40]

The second inference which could be drawn was that the wise/virtuous man did not need *anyone* else—neither family nor friends—for happiness. The more extreme versions of this rather stark idea, although not absent from Greek thought, were not very common.[41] (Indeed, it could be—and was—said that because a self-sufficient man did not need others, he was therefore in the best position to have the highest kind of pure, disinterested relations with them.[42]) Nevertheless, some aspects of this idea were found, and continued into the early Christian monastic world. Let me juxtapose some remarks of Diogenes, Aristotle, and St Basil, who in the 4th-century was the first great theorist of communal, cenobitic monastic life.

Diogenes, the archetype of self-sufficiency in the classical world, is reported to have said that he learnt from his teacher Antisthenes 'what is mine (*ta ema*) and what is not mine. Possessions are not mine, nor kindred, nor family, nor friends . . .'.[43] Aristotle, in the discussion of friendship in the Nichomachean Ethics argues against the view that 'the supremely happy are self-sufficing. and so have no need of friends'; he acknowledges that as a material being and a citizen the sage will need others, both psychologically and physically. But when engaged in philosophical contemplation, the sage 'is the most self-sufficient of men', because 'self-sufficiency will belong in the highest degree to the contemplative activity'. Although this activity depends on 'something divine' in man, rather than the human, still it is 'the true self of each individual'.[44] In a famous passage of the Politics, Aristotle argued that 'he who is by nature and not by ill-luck without a community (or city, *apolis*) is either sub-human or superhuman'. 'The *polis* is by nature prior to the individual' because 'each individual when separate is not self-sufficient'; but 'whoever is incapable of entering into a community, or whoever does not need to because of (his) self-sufficiency, has no part of the *polis*, and is like an animal or a god'.[45] In context, this remark is a means of explaining the subject matter of the book, that of man as 'a political animal', or better 'a being who lives in a *polis*'; but, leaving aside the issue of animals—although much might be said about the affinities of ascetics with them[46]—one might argue that if we remember the idea in the *Ethics* that the divine, contemplative part of man was in some sense his 'true self', then the conclusion to be drawn is that for Aristotle the real self of man is in this way apolitical, or non-social, and in itself self-sufficient.

In Christian doctrine, of course, the notion of man as self-sufficient, isolated from God and his fellow-men, is anathema both metaphysically and morally. Nonetheless, compare the following remarks of St Basil with those of Diogenes and Aristotle. In his Second Letter, Basil speaks of 'withdrawal from the world' (*anachōrēsis tou kosmou*); he describes the world as consisting in wife, children, the household, and involvement in contracts, lawcourts and farm business: 'withdrawal from the world does not mean bodily removal from it, but the severance of the soul from sympathy with the body, becoming without city (*apolis*), without home, personal possessions, love of friends, property, ... social relations . . .'.[47] In one of his Homilies, he warns:

> 'keep watch over yourself; not over what you possess, nor over what is around you, but over yourself alone. For what we are is one thing, what we possess is another, and what is around us another. Ourselves, soul and mind (*psuchē*, *nous*), we have been made in the image of the Creator; we possess the body and the senses by which it operates; around us there are riches, children, all the necessities of life'.[48]

Here we seem to have the same idea of our true being as in some sense non-political, asexual and non-social. 'Withdrawal from the world' is thus meant to facilitate the realization of this 'true self'. (One should add, of course, that this realization is seen as a precondition or concomitant of the development of perfect charity for others.)

In the Buddhist case, a metaphysical self-sufficiency is not so much an anathema as an impossibility, because its fundamental doctrine is that no self exists. There is, however, a great deal of stress on moral and practical self-reliance, and on the simple, non-luxurious life ideally to be led by a monk. One finds very frequently exhortations to be 'an island (refuge) to oneself', to remember that 'one is one's own master', and that 'one purifies/saves oneself, no-one purifies/saves another', and the like.[49] A Buddhist virtue which covers elements of both the material and the interpersonal senses of *autarkeia* is *appicchatā*, 'having few wants', which is often coupled with *santutthi*, 'contentment'. They are both found in a common list of monastic virtues, which also includes 'solitude' (*paviveka*) and 'unsociability' (*asamsagga*).[50] The monk who possesses these virtues is thus as free as a bird:

> 'A monk is content with (sufficient) robes to protect his body, and sufficient alms-food to sustain his stomach. Wherever he goes, taking (these) with him as he goes (he is content)—just as a bird on the wing wherever it flies takes its wings with it as it flies'.[51]

These two forms of contentment, with robes and alms-food, occur standardly in a list of four, of which the others are contentment with any dwelling-place, and with the life of spiritual development. In relation to dwelling-place, a monk is—ideally—content anywhere, whether in a crowded urban monastery or alone 'at the foot of a tree' in a forest.[52] Psychologically, then, the presence of others is not necessary to the monk's contentment; he does not need them. At every ordination ceremony, the monk will vow to depend only on four 'requisites': begging his food, using cast-off rags as clothing, living at the foot of a tree, and using cows' urine as medicine.[53] I think it wrong to imagine that literal reliance on these four requisites has ever been meant necessarily to characterize a monk's life, although it has always been possible as an option, as an act of supererogatory asceticism. Rather, these 'requisites' are all that a monk ideally needs or wants. Anything else—that is, most of any ordinary monk's life, including his social relations—is to be seen as an extra comfort.

FRIENDSHIP IN THE PERFECT COMMUNITY

Although Christian and Buddhist monks are thus seen as ideally self-sufficient and single individuals, in both cases they are brought together in communities. There is in both a strong ideology of communal togetherness, which must now be balanced against that of their individuality. I shall approach this through the ideal/virtue of friendship, for a number of reasons. In Greek thought the term *philia* was regularly juxtaposed with *autarkeia*, self-sufficiency, and in this case we can also make a comparison with Buddhism directly, because *mettā* or *mittatā*, both of which mean literally friendship, are used as monastic technical terms. More importantly, in all cases the virtue of friendship in monastic communities can be linked with its wider role in society. Although anthropological investigation of this is not extensive, there are a variety of relationships—the patron–client link, 'pseudo-kinship' phenomena like godparenthood, blood-brothership and the like, along with the many forms of friendship itself—which are very widespread indeed as elements of what Eisenstadt and Roniger have recently called 'Interpersonal relations and the structure of trust in society',[54] but which are not in themselves part of the more extensive and (biologically) stable structure of kinship. It is not surprising that monks, who are as I have argued *essentially* 'outside' reproductive-kinship relations, should emphasise friendship as their appropriate form of affection and reciprocity.

In Christian doctrine friendship for particular others is seen as a lesser virtue than love, *agapē*, for all.[55] However, in the monastic community, which here as in other ways prefigures the heavenly life to come, there is no such distinction to be drawn. All others are one's friends, and the monastery becomes a place of paradisal friendliness.[56] (This is one of the reasons why particular friendships are normally—though not always—prohibited in monastic groups.[57]) Early Christian articulation of friendship usually followed or adapted classical models, and especially that of Aristotle. He had distinguished three types of friendship, which will be more recognizable to anthropologists as all being genuinely forms of friendship than they often have been to theologians and philosophers: those based on mutual utility, those based on mutual pleasure, and those based on virtue.[58] In Aristotle the matter is disputed, but certainly for early Christian writers, only friendships based on virtue were truly friendships. In Christian writing the 'lower' forms were seen as carnal, material or 'worldly', while friendships based on virtue, that is on love of God, were spiritual, and in more than one sense divine and angelic. Throughout the early period and into the Middle Ages, two friends and God are thought of as forming a mystical Trinity: and it was this theological notion which gave new meaning to the many classical aphorisms on friendship which the Christian writers took over: for example, a friend as 'another self', an *alter ego*, two friends as sharing one soul (being literally unanimous), or the idea of friends holding everything in common (Pythagoras' *koina ta tōn philōn*).[59]

This last point, the communitarian aspect of monastic friendship, was universally seen through the picture of the earliest Church given in the Acts of the Apostles (4, 32–5):

> The whole body of believers was united in heart and soul. Not a man of them claimed any of his possessions as his own, but everything was held in common, while the apostles bore witness with great power to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. They were all held in high esteem; for they had never a needy person among them, because all who had property in land or houses sold it, brought the proceeds of the sale, and laid the money at the feet of the apostles; it was then distributed to any who stood in need.

The perfect friendship of the monastery was seen as an attempt to recreate this early apostolic community;[60] and indeed it provided a legend of the origins of monasticism which is the exact opposite of the modern received wisdom I argued against earlier. In the version of Cassian, in the late 4th-century, although the earliest Church was thus completely communistic, later as the number of converts increased, so their ardour cooled. Those who wished to rekindle the early spirit then left the cities to form communities of *monachoi*, so-called because they were single celibates. *After* this, as what he calls the 'flowers and fruits' arising from this rich community root, there arose the physically solitary anchorites whom Cassian saw as the best kind of monk.[61] This model of monasticism, as basically communitarian but offering the possibility of striking out for higher things as a hermit, became more or less standard throughout both Eastern and Western branches of Christianity.[62]

In a fuller treatment attention would have to be paid to all the various and different kinds of Christian cenobitism;[63] but overall there were, I think, two main models of community life. Firstly, the *polis*: to join a monastery was to 'enroll in the citizenship of heaven'; to become an *ouranopolitēs*, 'a dweller in the heavenly city': and *politeia*, the standard Greek word for a political constitution was regularly used for a monastic one, as were other derivatives of *polis*.[64] One could cite passages from St Basil, differing from but complementing those I gave earlier, in which he argues on classical Aristotelian grounds that man is a social being and that therefore cenobitical monasticism is the most appropriate form.[65]

The second model was that of the army, of soldiers fighting a holy war. This had been important in Judaism: the Essenes/Qumran community (or communities) were, or contained, groups of celibate males, who could remain such despite the Jewish religious injunction to marry and have children, because they believed themselves to be awaiting the imminent end of the world. In the ensuing battle between good and evil, they would fight the good fight, and so now held themselves in military preparedness, living as celibate soldiers.[66] Early Christian monasticism took over this imagery, and even on occasion—particularly in the Pachomian houses of Egypt—came to assume it literally.

Military solidarity between monks, given the authority structure centring on the Master or Abbot, is naturally akin to military discipline and obedience. Perhaps surprisingly, the virtue of friendship comes rather closely to resemble this. In the 16th of John Cassian's Conferences, a short treatise on friendship, although perfect friendship is only possible between perfected men, still the way to achieve perfect communal harmony and peace is by renouncing one's own will and opinions and always deferring to the advice of a superior.[67] Interpersonal intimacy is made possible by strict allegiance to a shared doctrine.

In Buddhism, monastic friendship is not seen as an end in itself; rather it is a means to the individual end of *nirvāna*, or perhaps better it is the milieu in which that end is realizable by individuals. It is, nonetheless, a very important value. In one text, found in the Canon and frequently repeated in later literature, the Buddha's close friend and attendant Ananda exclaims that 'good friendship is half of the holy life'. 'Say not so, Ananda' is the reply, 'good friendship is the whole of the holy life'.[68] There are many places where unity and concord among monastic groups are extolled.[69] It is said that while householders quarrel because of their lust for sense-pleasures, renouncers quarrel because of their lust for doctrines and 'views';[70] and the ideal of a tranquil harmony without disagreements or strife is simultaneously a psychological and a behavioural prescription. The following text is characteristic of the ideal: the Buddha is talking to a monk called Anuruddha, who lives with two others in a forest grove.

> 'I hope you are keeping well, Anuruddha, that you are comfortable and not short of almsfood'? 'We are keeping well, venerable Sir, we are comfortable and not

> short of almsfood'. 'I hope you are all living together, Anuruddha, in concord and harmony, (in unity) like milk and water mixed together, regarding each other with kindly eyes'? 'We are, venerable Sir'. 'But how, Anuruddha, do you live thus'? 'Venerable Sir, as to that, I think: "It is a gain for me, it is an advantage for me that I am living with such companions in the holy life". For this reason I act towards them in a friendly way, in thought, word and deed, both openly and in private; and for this reason I think "Now, suppose I were to surrender my own mind and live according to the mind of these venerable ones"?; and I act accordingly. Venerable Sir, we have different bodies, but assuredly only one mind'.[71]

The terms 'good friend' and 'good friendship' (*kalyānamitta/tā*) come to be used as technical terms in the later tradition. In the most specific sense, 'good friend' refers to a meditation teacher who chooses a meditation subject for his pupil. But the term more widely indicates a senior monk who advises and encourages his fellows. The abstract noun I have rendered loosely as 'good friendship' should in fact be translated in the passive, 'having good friends', as it refers to the virtue shown by a junior monk in being ready to accept the advice and encouragement of his more senior 'advisor-monks' (*ovādaka-bhikkhu*). A closely related, and in some contexts almost synonymous virtue is *sovacassatā*, literally 'easiness to speak to'. It is often used in disciplinary contexts, and so translators have rendered it accordingly as 'easy admonishability' or simply 'obedience'.[72]

Although obedience is never in Buddhist monasticism explicitly regarded as a virtue in itself, as it is in Christianity,[73] nonetheless it seems clear that the virtue of monastic friendship in Buddhism has taken the same course as I exemplified in Cassian: mutual affection and harmony become allied to the solidarity which arises from a shared doctrinal allegiance, and which is developed and manifested in the 'good behaviour' demanded by a monastic Rule.

MONASTICISM AND THE IDEAL SOCIETY

In this last section, I shall try to sketch the (hypothetical) connection between the ideas discussed in the preceding two sections, and individualist, contractarian social theory, on both the conceptual and historical levels. I would stress that the connection, if it can be established at all, will be purely one of form, rather than of content. If monasticism *is* relevant here, it will still not necessarily be relevant to any and every value which this kind of individualism holds dear.

In the idyllic pictures of monastic friendship, it may seem that both Christian and Buddhist monasticism aim to incarnate the close sense of community which sociologists often call, following Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft* (usually translated 'community'): that is, a small-scale group characterized by close cohesion, emotional intensity and absence of internal division. However, this must again be complemented with the strong stress on the singleness and self-sufficiency of the ideal monk discussed earlier. In *this* perspective, however much communality is extolled, the monastic group looks more like a *Gesellschaft* (usually translated 'society'): that is, an association between essentially separate, or separable individuals whose relations are governed by contract and whose ultimate goal lies beyond the immediate fact of association.[74] (This is true, I think, even in the Christian case, where the terrestrial monastic community, however intrinsically virtuous, is still only a prefiguring of the greater glory of the celestial community of heaven.[75]) In fact, although there is a great danger of over-schematization here, one might even say that from this perspective, the monastic group directly instantiates the vision of the most simplistic kind of individualist, social contract theory, where society is seen as a collection of what are in some sense non-social, but adult and (supposedly) rational, agents whose joining together in association results from a conscious and rational decision that that is where their interests and aspirations will best be furthered.[76] We have seen that, leaving aside the metaphysical differences between the two systems, the true nature of the monk in both is 'non-social' *because* non-sexual; and relations between monks, whether necessary or contingent, are construed as friendship, a chosen and quasi-contractarian (because necessarily reciprocal) relation independent of reproductive-kinship.[77] In theory of course this can apply equally well to both men and women; but in practice, historically, the position of nuns has almost universally been both ambiguous and inferior, just as individualist political theory has regularly taken *adult males* to be the relevant components of society. Although not all of this applies equally to both Buddhism and Christianity, let me quote what Midgley calls her 'crude summary' of the view of human nature in individualism: a human individual is, she says,

> essentially an isolated will, guided by an intelligence, arbitrarily connected to a slightly unsatisfactory array of feelings, and lodged, rather by chance, in an equally unsatisfactory human body. Each individual's relation to all others is optional, arranged by contract. It depends on the calculations of the intellect and on aims freely chosen by the will.[78]

This highly implausible 'cerebral view of personal identity' could remain central to this kind of social thought, thanks to the fact that it was tacitly assumed that women would supply both emotion and the material circumstances for sexual love and human reproduction, without impinging on the political process. Thus, as Midgley also says:

> The whole idea of a free independent, enquiring, choosing individual, an idea central to European thought, has always been essentially the idea of a male. It was

> so developed by the Greeks, and still more by the great libertarian movements of the 18th century. In spite of its force and nobility, it contains a deep strain of falsity, not just because the reasons why it was not applied to one half of the human race were not honestly looked at, but because the supposed independence of the male was itself false. It was parasitical, taking for granted the love and service of non-autonomous females (and indeed often of the less enlightened males as well). It pretended to be universal when it was not.

I do not mean to make any general point about women and political theory here, other than to stress that the cerebral and non-social view of individuals found in monastic theory, insofar as it might be taken to be a model for all views of human nature and community, contains just this 'deep strain of falsity' which Midgley criticizes. And again, I certainly do not wish to be taken as making any general criticism of monasticism. Rather, the point is that if the monastic community is taken as being paradigmatic for all communities, and if this more general ideal community is not located in the future in the altogether different—and crucially, non-sexual—conditions of heaven, then the result will be an ideal society of the individualist, contractarian type. And *this*, I think, is the place where we can be much more specific than is Dumont in tracing a difference between Christianity and Buddhism in this area, and in finding one—but not all—of the religious roots of our 'individualism'.

Before trying to describe this difference in more detail, let me note in passing just what the level of comparison is that I mean to make. Often in comparative studies it seems to me to be very unclear exactly what is being compared with what: explicit theories or implicit assumptions, psychological attitudes or conceptual structures, elements of historical causation or personal experience, and so on. Here I wish to comment only on the respective traditions of religious and specifically monastic thought on the one hand, and on those which we now label social and political theory on the other. In both cases we are dealing with ideals presented in texts; and the comparison I wish to make is between these textual ideals.

What I wish to suggest is as follows. (I offer this as an empirical hypothesis, which can be tested and which might turn out to be false; I emphasize this, because in comparative studies the temptation to a priorism is always strong.) The 'heavenly city' of the monastery in Christianity played a paradigmatic role which it did not in Buddhism, and in Indian culture more widely. As it was represented as instantiating now the final goal of heaven, those who did not follow St Augustine in seeing human political society as 'a divinely ordained order imposed on fallen men as a remedy for their sins'[79] could look to the ideal monastic community as demonstrating the structure of any ideal community whether in the hereafter or here and now (St Augustine himself, of course, was a major theorist of monasticism[80]). As the influence which I am hypothesizing will be on the level of underlying presuppositions about what perfected human nature will be, the articulation of which was always doctrinally problematic, it is perhaps difficult to see how its existence could be empirically demonstrated. But one place to look, I suggest, is Utopianism.

It will help to be more precise in using the term Utopianism than is the otherwise appropriate description of it as attempting to create a 'heaven on earth'. Davis, in his book *Utopia and the Ideal Society*,[81] has made a very helpful categorization of five types of 'ideal society', of which utopia is only one. They are, he stresses, Weberian ideal types: that is, they are not meant as mutually exclusive depictions of actual historical forms; rather, historical examples will almost always blend elements from two or more types. They are: (1) *The Land of Cockaygne*, which takes its name from a medieval English poem. This is 'a world of instant gratification, of wishing trees, fountains of youth, rivers of wine, self-roasting birds, sexually promiscuous and ever-available partners'.[82] (2) *Arcadia*, here, although nature is bountiful, men's desires are moderated so that all live in a state of calm, gentle fulfilment, in harmony with nature and each other, usually in a rural or otherwise simple and 'unsophisticated' setting. (3) *The Perfect Moral Commonwealth*, here natural resources are at their normal level, but society is made harmonious by the moral reformation of all individuals, who all attain by moral effort a greater or lesser degree of perfection. (4) *The Millenium*, where attention is concentrated not so much on the details of the kind of society to be attained, but on the matter of attaining it, which is by supernatural intervention 'independent of the wills of individual men and women'.[83] (5) *Utopia*, where both man and nature are taken as they are, sinful and inadequate, and the solution is found in systems of social organization and control which produce orderliness in human civilization, overcoming the disorder of nature and man's moral inefficiency. 'Such systems' says Davis 'are inevitably bureaucratic, institutional, legal and educational, artificial and organizational'.[84]

Although Christian monasticism contains elements of arcadia and the perfect moral commonwealth, it is with the utopian type that it has most connection. According to Davis,

> The utopian mode is distinguished by its pursuit of legal, institutional, bureaucratic and educational means of producing a harmonious society. Since nature and man have proved inadequate, artifice must be tried . . . Essential to the exercise, therefore, was the setting up of such an apparatus of social control as would not be corrupted by the deficiencies inherent in men and nature. It is not surprising in this context to find so many of the early modern utopians drawn to the monastic model, for the monastery in its discipline, structures, rituals and rule of life had sought to subdue sinful nature in servitude to a perfect or holy commonwealth.[85]

The influence of the monastic model can be seen *explicitly* in a number of places:[86] in the early utopians, Thomas More himself, Campanella's *City of the Sun*, Andreae's *Christianopolis*, and in others of the period; in the architectural visions (and realities) of medieval cities; in varying ways in the utopian socialists of the early 19th-century, the Saint-Simonians, Fourier, Robert Owen; and in the many small-scale communal movements in America throughout the 19th century, where the many different attempts to resolve the conflict between the ideals of a perfect, orderly community and the problems of sexuality and reproduction produced a variety of results, both tragic and comic.[87] More generally, in the monastery, in its ideal form, could be found in the highest degree the *implicit* notion that human life can be rationally planned, that real needs and genuine satisfactions can be distinguished from false ones, and that social arrangements can be so ordered as to regulate life to these ends, and to save us from the free play of wayward desire and fickle fortune.[88] In a large proportion of utopian writers, historians have traced the constant concern with the organization of the smallest details of everyday life, food, dress, etc., to the various monastic rules created in the early medieval period. In this way monastic and other communitarian, utopian groups are at one extreme end of a spectrum in which we may include all political visions which seek to take conscious control over social events and order them according to a blueprint. (In this sense, the umbrella term often used of monastic and other groups, *intentional communities*, may be extended to all visions of society which would like to see it follow a prescriptive model.)

Of course, this emphasis on organization and discipline is the very reason why many people find these sorts of view to be dystopian rather than utopian; as Davis puts it, 'the utopian's prior value is not happiness but order, and, while he may go on to consider the happiness that might be built on that order, this is not necessary'.[89] Even Gerrard Winstanley, who in the 17th-century sought with a characteristically utopian romanticism to free Englishmen from the yoke of private property and recreate the apostolic communism of the early church, came increasingly in his late writings to a concern with the ordering and disciplining of life, with an elaborately worked out system of punishments for infringing his rules.[90] The monastic virtues of chastity and obedience, connected as we have seen with the individualism of the single monk and the social ideal of friendly charity respectively, when transferred to a secular context take on a rather different complexion. If we are to believe Foucault's claim in *Discipline and Punish*, the monastic model, with its timetables, separation and individuation of subjects and rigorous control of the body, was applied from the latter half of the 18th-century onwards to the practical development of such institutions as hospitals, schools, prisons and factories, and finally to the organization—both imagined and real—of society as a whole.[91] This view of the history of the gradual individuation of members of society as autonomous subjects involves just as much the existence and apparatus of bureaucratic surveillance and control as it does freeing the individual's independent powers of rational choice.[92]

If this connection between monasticism, utopian visions of the ideal society and hence social and political thought generally can be sustained by fuller historical research than I have attempted here, then we would have traced, I think, an important religious source of our individualism, as Dumont wants, and also be able to draw a contrast with the Buddhist tradition. There one can see various versions of an 'ideal society' which correspond fairly well to Davis' first four types, Cockaygne, Arcadia, the Perfect Moral Commonwealth and even Millenialism.[93] One can also, as in the Christian case, connect certain themes in monasticism with the idyllic and benevolent simplicity of Arcadia, and with the moral heroics and perpetual striving of the perfect moral commonwealth. But one cannot, as far as I can see, trace anything comparable to the utopian mode proper, and still less any sense that the monastic community might be a prototypical form of such a perfectly planned community.[94] Of course, there are a number of ways in which this difference can be accounted for, or at least further specified. For instance, in the Buddhist case there is the fundamental ideological and practical fact that monks must be dependent on lay support for their material needs;[95] in the Christian case, as Eisenstadt has argued in response to Dumont, there were from the very beginning strong and 'inherent this-worldly orientations, i.e. the vision that the reconstruction of the mundane world is part or a part of the way of salvation, that the mundane world constitutes at least one arena for activities which are relevant to salvation—indeed in marked contrast to Buddhism—[which are] of course rooted in its Jewish origins'.[96] Thus in Buddhism there is a permanent ideological–structural obstacle to the thorough permeation of lay society by the monastic ideal, and in Christianity a fundamental pull towards just that.

Whatever is the wider cultural-historical explanation for the difference, it seems clear that comparative study can show that Christian monasticism did construct a vision of an ideal human community, composed of non-sexual adult individuals, which was potentially universalizable; it has been the hypothesis of this paper that it *was* universalized in some forms of utopianism and of the social-contract strand in political thought. In Buddhism, on the contrary, although the individualism and perfect friendship of monks are in themselves very similar to those of the Christian monastic tradition, they were not universalizable, and so there has not arisen a tradition of universalized social theory and aspiration based on these ideals.

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NOTES

All Pali texts are cited from editions of the Pali Text Society, and all abbreviations used for them follow the scheme of the Critical Pali Dictionary (Copenhagen, 1924–).

1 It is, I think, impossible to use this word without hitting more targets than one aims at: for a helpful account of its many different senses, see Steven Lukes, *Individualism* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1973). I mean to focus particularly on elements of what Lukes calls 'The Abstract Individual' and 'Political Individualism' in chapters 11 and 12, ideas associated with theories of natural law and the social contract. Charles Taylor has argued that this political ideal, as it developed particularly in the 17th century, was closely associated with specific epistemological notions of a free knowing subject set over against an objectified Nature, in what he calls the *atomistic* view: see his Hegel (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975), chapter 1, 'Aims of a New Epoch', and his *Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), *Vol. I. Human Agency and Language*, especially Chapter 4, 'The Concept of a Person', and *Vol. II Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, especially Chapter 7, 'Atomism'. Of particular relevance to my argument here is the claim that this 'ideal of the modern free subject' has 'a spiritual origin, in a sense which is understandable from our Western religious tradition. In both its Greek and Christian roots (albeit a deviation in this latter stream), this has included an aspiration to rise above the merely human, to step outside the prison of the peculiarly human emotions, and to be free of the cares and the demands they make on us. This is of course an aspiration which also has analogous forms in Indian culture, and perhaps, indeed, in all human cultures' (The Concept of a Person, *op. cit.*, p. 112).

2 Published in *Religion*, **12** (1982), and in M. Carrithers, S. Collins & S. Lukes (eds) *The Category of the Person* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), from which quotations are cited.

3 Translated by E. Fischoff, Methuen, London, 1965, quotation from p. 166. On the previous page he writes, still more vaguely—and, as I shall try to show, quite wrongly—'The "world" in the religious sense, i.e. the domain of social relationships . . .'.

4 Translated by O. Wyon, George Allen and Unwin, London 1931, pp. 100 and 108. Compare B. Wilson's usage, which—although perfectly suited to his purposes—shows a similar dependence on specific concepts of Christian theology: 'the wider society, its culture, values and cultural goals, the experience of evil and the means of escaping it and attaining salvation—which together we have referred to simply as "the world"' (*Magic and the Millenium*, Heinemann, London, 1973, p. 26).

5 Apart from the Patristic Greek Dictionary (G. W. H. Lampe, ed., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1961), I follow in particular J. Gribomont, 'Le renoncement au monde dans l'idéal ascétique de saint Basile', *Irenikon* 1958, **31** pp. 282–307 and 460–75 (the quotation from Basil is from p. 464 and note 2).

6 Of course, Louis Dumont is the central figure here: see his *Homo Hierarchus* (2nd edition, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980) and the seminal essay 'World Renunciation in Indian Religions', now reprinted as Appendix B in *Homo Hierarchicus*. See also his articles 'The Modern Conception of the Individual: notes on its genesis and that of concomitant institutions', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, **8**, 1965, pp. 13–61; 'Religion, Politics and Society in the Individualistic Universe', *Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1970, pp. 31–41; and the Introduction to *From Mandeville to Marx; The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1977). For a brief

brief account of the evolution of the notions of *karma* and *dharma*, see my *Selfless Persons* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982), Chapter 1, where I draw heavily on Dumont.

7 P. Olivelle, editor & translator (Vienna, 1977). I give the translation he used in 'A Definition of World Renunciation', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Sudäsiens*, 19, 1975. See also his important articles 'The Notion of Āśrama in the Dharmasūtras', *Wiener Zeitschrift . . .*, **18**, 1974, and 'Contributions to the semantic history of samnyāsa', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, **101**, 1981. (This latter contains important new information on the development of the idea of *sannyāsa*, and what was renounced by it.)

8 This will be fully developed in her forthcoming Oxford D.Phil. thesis. Preliminary reports are given in two unpublished papers, 'Dharma, Moksa and Hindu Asceticism', and 'A Framework for the Analysis of Hindu Asceticism'. Ms Teskey currently teaches in the Department of Religion, Concordia University, Montreal. Comments on the position of Jainism in relation to these matters will require a lot of research: see, for example, C. Caillat, *Atonements in the Ancient Ritual of the Jaina Monks* (L. D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, 1975), especially pp. 21-46; Padmanabh S. Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification* (Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 19), Chapter 8; Nathmal Tatia and Muni Mahendra Kumar, *Aspects of Jaina Monasticism* (Jaina Vishva Bharati, Rajasthan, 1981). For the Lingāyats, see N. J. Bradford, 'The Indian Renouncer: structure and transformation in a Lingāyat community', in R. Burghart & A. Cantlie (eds), *Indian Religion* (Curzon Press, London, 1985), Chapter 5.

9 See Olivelle, 'The Notion of Āśrama . . .', cited in note 7, and G. S. Ghurye, *Indian Sādhus* (Bombay, 1964), pp. 25–6, 79–80, cited in Teskey, 'Dharma, Moksa, . . .', note 13.

10 For a very rich presentation of the ideologies underlying both 'orthodox' Vedic and Tantric forms of social being, see Alexis Sanderson, 'Purity and Power among the Brahmans of Kashmir', in Carrithers *et al.*, cited in note 2.

11 'World Renunciation . . .', cited in note 6, p. 277.

12 Some examples: 'These eight worldly conditions (*lokadhammā*), O monks, keep the world turning round, and the world turns around these eight worldly conditions. What are these eight? Gain and loss, repute and disrepute, praise and blame, joy and woe. These eight worldly conditions are encountered by an uninstructed worlding (*assutavā puthujjano*) and they are also encountered by an instructed noble disciple'. [The difference being that the latter, but not the former, understands these eight conditions to be impermanent, and so is not elated or dejected by them.] A IV 157–8, translated by Nyanaponika Thera, *Anguttara Nikāya*, Part Two, (Buddhist Publication Society, Wheel No. 208–11, Ceylon, 1975), pp. 96–9.

'In what has this world arisen/In what does it hold concourse/On what depending—in what respect—/Does this world get oppressed? In the six [senses, the five plus mind] the world arose/In the six it holds concourse/On the six themselves depending/In the six it gets oppressed'. 'It is in this very fathom-long physical frame that, I declare, lies the world, the arising of the world, and the cessation of the world . . .' S.I 41 and 62, translated by Bhikkhu Ñānānanda, *Samyutta Nikāya, an Anthology*, Part II (Buddhist Publication Society, Wheel No. 183–5, Ceylon, 1972), pp. 5 and 8.

13 *Selfless Persons*, Chapter 5.3.

14 For example, *The Laws of Manu* (translated by Bühler, Sacred Books of the East

Vol. 25, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1886), p. 206 (VI, 42–3): 'let him always wander alone, without any companion . . . he shall neither possess a fire nor a dwelling'.

15 For India see Charles Malamoud, 'Village et Forêt', *European Journal of Sociology* **17**, 1976. In Buddhism the distinction between village-dwelling and forest-dwelling monks (*gāma-, araññā-vāsin*) became symbolically central; but see S. J. Tambiah, *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets, A Study in Charisma, Hagiography, Sectarianism and Millenial Buddhism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984) for a valuable warning against taking these symbolic roles to be straightforwardly accurate descriptions. For medieval Europe, see Jacques Le Goff, *La civilisation de l'occident medieval* (Arthaud, Paris, 1965) Chapitre VI, 'Structures spatiales et temporaires: clairières et forêts', pp. 169–72. In a very large-scale perspective, this may be an ancient Indo-European legacy: see Jan Gonda, *Loka: World and Heaven in the Veda* (Amsterdam, 1966).

16 See Antoine Guillaumont, 'La conception du désert chez les moines d'Egypte', in his *Aux Origines du monachisme chrétien* (Abbaye de Bellefontaine, Maine et Loire, 1979), chapter 5; D. K. Chitty, *The Desert a City* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1966), *passim.*

17 For Classical Greece, see Euripides' *Bacchae*; and the comments of Charles Segal, *Dionysiac Poetics and Euripides' Bacchae* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1982), Chapter 4 'The Horizontal Axis: House, City, Mountain'. (I am grateful to Richard Buxton for this reference.)

For early Eastern monasticism, see A. Voöbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient*, Vols. I and II (Corpus Sciptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Vols. 184 and 197, Louvain 1958 and 1960), e.g. Vol. I pp. 221–2; Vol. II, pp. 2–9, 19–27, 94–5; *et freq.* For later Eastern Christianity, see Peter Charanis, 'The monk as an element of Byzantine society', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, **25** (1971) p. 64; and D. M. Nicol, *Meteora The Rock Monasteries of Thessaly* (2nd edition, London, Variorum Reprint 1975), especially 25–6.

18 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Roman Studies*, **61**, 1971, p. 91, reprinted in *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Faber and Faber, London, 1982) p. 131. This seminal paper decisively demonstrated the necessity of taking a realistic sociological view of the holy man. See also his *Town, Village and Holy Man: the case of Syria*, reprinted in *Society and the Holy*, especially p. 161: 'ferocious asceticism . . . was the *sine qua non* of the social involvement of the Syrian holy man'; and *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Harvard University Press, London, 1978) pp. 87, 94 on the similar 'ritual(s) of disengagement' of the Egyptian Desert Fathers. The close involvement of monks with society, in a variety of ways, is one important theme, amongst many others, in the exceptionally rich and sensitive work of Philip Rousseau, in *Ascetics, Authority and the Church* (Oxford, Oxford University Press 1978) and *Pachomius* (Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1985) (see especially in the latter pp. 9–13 and Chapter 8).

19 See the examples in *Selfless Persons*, Chapter 5.3.

20 *Anachōrēsis*, as is well known, was used for the 'flight' of Egyptian peasants from their village to escape taxation and other fiscal problems: on the term generally see A. J. Festugière, *Personal Religion among the Greeks* (Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1954) Chapter 4, 'The Inclination to Retirement'; and Anthony Meredith, 'Asceticism-Christian and Greek', in *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.S., Vol. 27, 1976, p. 316, note 3. For *hēsuchia* see Kallistos Ware, 'Silence in Prayer: the meaning of *Hesychia*', in M. B. Pennington (ed.) *One Yet Two. Monastic Tradition East and West* (Cistercian Publications 29, Kalamazoo, 1976). For *erēmia*, often coupled with *hēsuchia*, see Guillaumont, 'La conception du

désert . . .’, cited in note 16. Thus Clement of Alexandria writes of the (Christian) ‘gnostic’: ‘a stranger (*xenos*) and sojourner (*parepidēmos*) in the whole of life is every such one, who, inhabiting the city, despises the things of the city which are admired by others, and lives in the city as in a desert . . .’ [Stromata VII, 12, translated by W. Wilson in *The Writings of Clement of Alexandria* (T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1869), Vol. II, p. 462]. On the theme of being a stranger (*xeniteia*), see Guillaumont ‘Le dépaysement course forme d’ascèse’, in his *Aux Origines*, cited in note 16.

21 Philip Rousseau has suggested to me (pers. comm.) that ‘about the interiorization of [these] various terms . . . I presume it matters that, in the Christian sphere, that was something that happened only gradually’. Even if this is in general true—the quote from Clement given in the previous note was written around 200 A.D.—it was certainly a development which occurred very early on. It clearly needs more detailed research to establish a chronology of the development from literal to metaphorical senses.

22 Longman, London, 1984, p.1, quoting Jerome, Epistle 14.

23 This can be illustrated by a comparison between English and French usage: in English, the word ‘celibate’ tends to denote directly the fact of chastity. The etymology of the word, however, from Latin *caelebs*, suggests only the status of being unmarried; and thus in French, to describe a man or woman as *un(e) célibataire* is only to say that he or she is unmarried, and not, as one might put it, to make any suggestions about his or her private life! In this paper, although the texts of Christianity and Buddhism obviously tend to stress the virtue(s) of chastity, my etic analysis is not tied to this emic corollary of celibacy, but takes ‘singleness’ to be primarily a matter of social position. See further p. 116 and note 77.

24 This interpretation of *monachos* has become part of the specialist scholarly consensus during the last 30 years, but it seems to be slow in reaching widespread recognition (although some very recent works destined for a popular audience may change this). A selection of relevant literature is: F. E. Morard, ‘Monachos, Moine. Histoire du terme grec jusqu’au 4^e siècle’, in *Frieburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, Vol. 20, 1973, pp. 332–411; A. Baker, ‘Syriac and the Origins of Monasticism’, in *Downside Review*, Vol. 86, 1968, pp. 342–53; J. Gribomont ‘Le Monachisme au sein de l’Eglise en Syrie et en Cappadoce’ in *Studia Monastica*, Vol. 7, 1965, pp. 7–24; R. Murray ‘The Exhortation to Candidates for Ascetical Vows at Baptism in the Ancient Syrian Church’, in *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 21, 1974, pp. 59–80; G. Quispel ‘L’Evangile selon Thomas et les origines de l’ascèse chrétienne’ in *Aspects du Judaeo-Christianisme*, Colloque de Strasbourg 1964, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1965; A. Guillaumont, *Aux Origines*, cited in note 16; and for important evidence and discussion, E. A. Judge ‘The earliest use of monachos for ‘monk’ (P. Coll. Youtie 77) and the origins of monasticism’, in *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, Vol. 20, 1977, pp. 72–89. Summaries of the relevant evidence and arguments can be found in, for instance, R. Murray, ‘The Features of the Earliest Christian Asceticism’, in P. Brook (ed.) *Christian Spirituality* (SCM, London 1975) (this contains a delightful discussion of the ‘1066 and All That’ approach to monastic history); T. Fry, O.S.B., *et al.* (eds), *The Rule of St. Benedict* (*The Liturgical Press* Minnesota, 1981), especially, pp. 3–41 and Appendix 1; J. Gribomont, ‘Monasticism and Asceticism. I Eastern Christianity’ in Bernard McGinn and John Meyendorff (eds), *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century* (RKP., London, 1986, Vol. 16 of *World Spirituality*). For a summary of early Syrian asceticism generally (where much of

the early 'spirit' of monasticism is clearly expressed), see Sebastian Brock, 'Early Syrian Asceticism', *Numen*, Vol. 20, 1973, pp. 1–19.

25 Evidence for these other senses is given throughout Guillaumont's *Aux Origines*, cited in note 16.

26 Fry *et al.* (eds), *The Rule of St Benedict* (cited in note 24), pp. 312–3.

27 Augustine on Psalm 132,6, cited in Fry *et al.* (eds), pp. 62–3.

28 See S. Dutt, *Monks and Monasteries of India* (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1962), especially chapters 1–6; P. Olivelle, *The Origin and Early Development of Buddhist Monachism*, M. D. Gunasena, Colombo, 1974); M. Wijayaratna, *Le Moine Buddhiste* (Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1983), especially chapters 1, 2 and 7. I agree entirely with Wijayaratna when he writes 'le moine bouddhiste était un être essentiellement social' (p. 130); indeed, it is a major aim of this paper to establish that this is so for *all* monks. The history of Buddhist monasticism has sometimes been written as if it paralleled the (false, legendary) evolution of the Christian form, such that solitary eremitism *preceded* the cenobitical sangha (see, surprisingly, Olivelle, *op. cit.* this note, p. 75; S. J. Tambiah, *Buddhism and the Spirit Cults of North-East Thailand*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970 p. 65, although this idea is nowhere mentioned in his 'The Renouncer, his individuality and his community', in *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, Vol. 15, 1981—a festschrift for Dumont—where he speaks, in my view quite correctly, of 'the corporate character of the early Sangha', p. 308). This is based on the apparently lapidary remark of the Buddha when sending his first monks out to preach, 'let not two of you go the same way'. I argue against this view in '*Mā ekena dve agamittha*: narrative structure and social history in Buddhist texts' (forthcoming).

29 *Khaggavisāna Sutta, Sutta Nipāta*, pp. 35–75. I give K. R. Norman's translation, from *The Group of Discourses* (Pali Text Society, London, 1984), p. 7.

30 Pj II 64: *eko ti pabbajjāsamkhātena eko . . . Samanasahassassāpi hi majjhe vattamāno gihisaññojanassa chinnattā eko.* Cf. Nidd I 454ff. on Sn 956.

31 *Ganavavassaggatthena* [or: *-vossaggatthena*—the texts are various and certainly to be emended. Both *vavassagga*, from Sanskrit *vyavasarga*, and *vossagga*, from *vyutsarga*, can be translated as 'abandoning' or 'renunciation'. I am grateful to K. R. Norman for help on this] *eko pubbe caritvāna*, in elucidation of *eko pubbe caritvāna methunam yo nisevati*, Sn 816, at Pj II 536, Nidd I 144–5, 153, 156–7.

In the same manner, the word *ārā-cārin*, 'living far (away)', is regularly used to mean 'far from unchastity', in a common phrase *brahmacārī ārācārī virato methunā gāmadhammā*: D I 4, M I 179, A IV 389 *et freq.*

32 Thus there is a standard 'complementary opposition' between being alone in a physical sense, 'separated from the crowd in body' and in the mental sense of 'separated from the defilement in mind' (*kāyena ganato . . . cittena kilesehi vūpakattha*): e.g. Mp IV 66 on A IV 143, and compare Pj II 157 on Sn. p.16., Ud–a 251 on Ud 41, Th–a 135 on Th 54.

33 See *Selfless Persons*, p. 172 and references cited in note 29; and those cited in K. R. Norman, Elder's Verses I (Pali Text Society, London 1969), p. 135 *ad* Th. 54.

34 Vin I 210 and compare IV 85–6. This is a point stressed by Richard Gombrich, in his forthcoming *Theravāda Buddhism: a social history from ancient Benares to modern Colombo* (RKP, London), Chapter 4.

35 The more isolated 'forest-dwelling' monks, if they gain a reputation for holiness, suffer from what Gananath Obeyesekere has happily termed 'the relentless piety of the masses' (cited in Richard Gombrich, *Precept and Practice*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 323). For a telling modern example, see Michael

Carrithers, *The Forest Monks of Sri Lanka* (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 242–3.

36 This can be seen in the commentarial tradition of the three 'seclusions' (*viveka*), of body, mind and substrate (of rebirth): see *Selfless Persons*, Chapter 5.3.2.

37 I use the rather inelegant phrase 'reproductive-kinship' because, as Philip Rousseau and Ilana Friedrich Sibber have reminded me (pers. comms), not only do monks in both traditions continue to use kinship vocabulary—usually 'brother', 'sister', 'father' and 'mother'—but also there is evidence that certain of these kin relations remained significant in practice. For early Christianity, see Philip Rousseau, 'Blood-relationships among Early Eastern Ascetics', in *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. **23**, 1972, pp. 135–44. In Buddhism, the Buddha is recorded as having allowed monks to transfer a 'gift of faith' (in this case robes) to their parents rather than let it waste (Vin I 298); while in the later Jātaka stories he is described as praising monks who give food to their parents: see Jā VI 69 (the *Sāmajātaka*) and Jātakas 3, 19, 23 and 27 of the *Paññāsa Jātaka* collection (text, Vols I and II, P. S. Jaini (ed.), Pali Text Society, London 1981 and 1983; translation *Apocryphal Birth Stories*, Vol. I, by I. B. Horner & P. S. Jaini, Vol. II, P. S. Jaini, Pali Text Society, London 1985, 1986).

38 See A. N. Rich, 'The Cynic Conception of autarkeia', in *Mnemosyne* 4th Series, Vol. 9, 1956, pp. 23–9; A. W. H. Adkins, 'Friendship and Self-sufficiency in Homer and Aristotle', Classical Quarterly, N. S., Vol. 13, 1963, pp. 30–46; John Ferguson, *Moral Values in the Ancient World* (Methuen, London, 1958), Chapter VIII, 'The Triumph of Autarcy'; and Arthur Lovejoy and George Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Octagon Books, New York, 1965 reprinted), where much of the relevant evidence is presented. In many, perhaps most ancient contexts this ideal/virtue was a matter of theoretical speculation and prescription: but there are some relevant sociological manifestations. The wandering Cynic preacher was an important model for the early Christian holy man, at least as a public figure purveying moral wisdom, and his demonstration of *autarkeia* was an important part of his message: see D. R. Dudley, *A History of Cynicism* (Methuen, London, 1937), especially pp. 172–4; George Boas, *Essays on Primitivism and Related Ideas in the Middle Ages* (The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1948), Chapter 4, 'Christianity and Cynicism', especially pp. 104–8 on 'The Simple Life'; Abraham J. Malherbe 'Self-definition among Epicureans and Stoics', in B. F. Meyer & E. P. Sanders (eds), *Jewish and Christian Self-definition. Vol. 3, Self-definition in the Graeco-Roman World* (SCM, London, 1982), pp. 46–59; F. G. Downing, 'Cynics and Christians', in *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 30, 1984, pp. 584–93. Directly relevant to my concerns here are the remarks of Peter Brown on the social role and significance of the early monks in Egypt: 'Autarky and total disengagement from the restraints of their neighbours were ideals which, though never realized, moulded the hopes of Egyptian farmers . . . [T]he act of *anachōrēsis* in itself, rather than any exceptional supernatural powers, was what the audience of the hermit saw in him. His powers and his prestige came from acting out, heroically, before a society enmeshed in oppressive obligations and abrasive relationships, the role of the utterly self-dependent, autarkic man'. (*The Making of Late Antiquity*, cited in note 18, pp. 83, 86.)

39 As argued by the later Cynic Peregrinus, in the second century A.D.: quoted in Dudley, *op. cit.* note 38, p. 178.

40 See Patristic Greek Dictionary, s.v. *autarkeia, autarkēs*. A good example, which may be set next to the Buddhist virtues of *appicchatā* and *santutthi* discussed on

pp. 111–2 and notes 50–3 below, comes from John Chrysostom's commentary on Paul's remark in 2 Corinthians 9, 8–9 that God will provide for them in such a way that having a complete sufficiency in all things (*en panti pantote pasan autarkeian echontes*) they will be able to give to the needy: 'for neither am I leading thee to the lofty peak of entire poverty [*aktēmosunē*—presumably as attained by ascetics], but for the present I require thee to cut off superfluities (*ta peritta*) and to desire a sufficiency alone (*tes autarkeias monēs eran*). Now the boundary of sufficiency is using those things, which it is impossible to live without . . . [He recommends vegetarian fare, if possible, with meat for those whose health requires it.] Thus let us think also in regard of clothing, and of the table, and of a dwelling-house, and of all our other wants; and in everything inquire what is necessary. For what is superfluous is also useless'. (John Chrysostom, Homilies on St Paul's Epistles, Oxford, 1879, p. 227.)

41 Two examples: in the *Lysis* (215 A–C) Plato expresses the idea (not his own, but cp. *Republic* 387 D11–E1) that because the self-sufficient sage does not need anyone, he will not cherish a friend when he is present, nor miss him when he is absent—and thus, paradoxically, he cannot be a *friend* at all. (Both references cited in Rich, *op. cit.* note 38, pp. 26–7). Diogenes Laertius reports Theodorus (*c.* late 4th- early-3rd-century B.C.) as having 'rejected friendship, because it did not exist either between the unwise or the wise; with the former when the want is removed, the friendship disappears, whereas the wise are self-sufficient and have no need of friends (Book II, 98, translated by R. D. Hicks, Heinemann, 1925, p. 227).

42 This seems, in particular to have been a common view amongst the Stoics: see J. C. Fraisse *Philia: La notion d'amitié dans la philosophie antique* (J. Vrin, Paris, 1974) Troisième Partie, especially pp. 364–5, 394–5 and note 35.

43 In a passage from Epictetus, *apud* Lovejoy and Boas, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

44 Ethics Book 9, Chapter 9, Book 10, Chapter 7. The phrase 'true self of each' is taken from the Loeb version (translated by H. Rackham, Heinemann, 1934, p. 619); J. A. K. Thompson's Penguin Classics version (London, revised edition, 1976, p. 331) has 'the true self of the individual'. The Greek has *doxeie d'an kai einai hekastos touto*, which might be more simply translated as 'and it would seem that this is what each person really is'. No specific psychological–metaphysical doctrine of the self is in play here, but merely a value judgement about what is 'the dominant and better part' (*to kurion kai ameinon*) of man. Compare the similar phrases about 'the intellectual part' (*to dianoētikon*) at Book 9, Chapter 4 (Loeb, pp. 534–5; Penguin, p. 294) and 'mind' or 'reason' (*nous*) in Book 8, Chapter 8 (Loeb, pp. 552–3; Penguin, p. 302).

45 Politics Book 1, Chapter 1. A. N. Rich, *op. cit.* note 38, p. 28 note 1, conjectures that this is a direct reference to the Cynic ideal (as exemplified on p. 24 of her article).

46 Ascetics and monks, by literally or symbolically renouncing the civilization created by men, are often therefore seen as coming to (or returning to) a more direct relationship with animals, in a variety of ways. They can, in the most extreme cases, live like animals: see Voöbus, *op. cit.*, note 17, Vol. I, pp. 152–6, and Vol. II, pp. 26–7. Although the Buddha condemned such practices (see e.g. M I 387–9, D III 6–8), still the (ideal) monk is often compared to a wild, and free animal: his mind is 'like that of a wild deer' (*migabhūtena cetasā* M I 450, II 121, Vin II 184). More usually, they are seen as having some special form of power over, or intimacy with animals: see, for Christian examples, the stories gathered by H. Waddell in *Beasts and Saints* (Constable, London, 1934); Benedicta Ward's

Introduction to *The Lives of the Desert Fathers* (*Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, translated by N. Russell, Mowbray, London and Oxford, 1981, p. 43; S. Kaplan, *The Monastic Holy Man and the Christianization of Early Solomonic Ethiopia* (Franz Steiner, Wiesbaden, 1984), pp. 87–90), 'The Holy Man as Lion Tamer'. In Buddhism the Buddha is often portrayed as calming down wild animals with the power of his loving-kindess (*mettā*), e.g. Vin II 108–9 (snakes), Vin II 194 (an elephant); one repeated story tells of an elephant and the Buddha, both tired of the company of their quarrelsome fellows, living happily together in the solitude of the forest: Vin I 351–2, Ud 41–2, Dhp–a I 58–62 (where they are joined by an enthusiastic but clumsy monkey). For the theme in modern Buddhist monasticism, see S. J. Tambiah, *op. cit.*, note 15, pp. 86–7, and M. Carrithers, *op. cit.*, note 35, pp. 284–93.

47 Translated by R. J. Deferrari in the Loeb edition (Heinemann, London, 1926, p. 11). It is right to state that, as P. Rousseau reminds me, this was an early letter of Basil, written to Gregory of Nazianzus in about 358, and it contains a number of ideas Basil came later to modify. In the so-called Longer Rules, particularly Rule 7, Basil very clearly prefers cenobitic to solitary monastic life, arguing that, *inter alia*, fear of condemnation by others facilitates 'withdrawal from sin' (*tēs hamartias hē anachōrēsis*). (On this see W. K. L. Clarke, translator, *The Ascetical Works of St Basil*, SPCK, London 1925, pp. 163–6).

48 Homily *Proseche seautōi* (*Attende tibi ipsi*), cited in Gribomont, *op. cit.*, note 5, pp. 467–8.

49 Examples are cited and discussed in *Selfless Persons*, Chapter 2.2.

50 See, for example, A V 129, M I 145 (the commentary Ps II 138 ff. is quite elaborate on these virtues, and various gradings within them). Compare A III 219, elaborated at Vism. 81 ff.

51 D I 71 *et freq.*

52 These are called the Four Noble Lineages (*ariyavamsā*), at D III 224–5, A II 27–9. The commentaries spell out 15 different kinds of 'abode', Sv 1016, Mp III 55.

53 These are the four *nissaya*: see Vin I 58 (where various ordinary dwelling-places are explicitly exemplified and declared to be 'additional acquisitions', *atirekalābhā*) *et freq.* There is a less drastic list of four necessary things, *paccaya*, which are robes (cīvara), begging (*pindapāta*), a dwelling-place (*senāsana*) and medicinal requisites (*gilāna-paccaya-bhesajja-parikkhāra*): see Vism. I 85 ff. for an elaborate account.

54 This is their subtitle, in S. N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, *Patrons, Clients and Friends* (Cambridge University Press, 1984). See also E. Leyton (ed.), *The Compact: Selected Dimensions of Friendship* (Newfoundland Social and Economic Papers, No. 3, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1974; and for a more popular presentation of the evidence, Robert Brain, *Friends and Lovers* (Paladin, London, 1977).

55 I have profited greatly from C. Small, The Understanding of Friendship in the works of selected Church Fathers of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries A.D. with reference to classical ideas of Friendship (unpubl. D.Phil thesis, Oxford, 1984), where a wealth of primary source material is cited. For the classical period see J.-C. Fraisse *op. cit.*, note 42, *passim*; and for a sensitive discussion of friendship as a Christian virtue, see Gilbert Meilander, *Friendship: a Study in Theological Ethics* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

56 These points are fully documented in A. M. Fiske, *Friends and Friendship in the Monastic Tradition* (Cidoc Cuaderno, No. 51, Mexico, 1970). For a brief presenta-

tion of the 'heavenly life' theme in the medieval tradition of Cluniac monasticism, see K. Hallinger, 'The Spiritual Life of Cluny in the Early Days', in N. Hunt (ed.), *Cluniac Monasticism in the Central Middle Ages* (Macmillan, London, 1971).

57 See Brian McGuire, 'Monastic Friendship and Toleration in Twelfth-Century Cistercian Life', in W. J. Sheils (ed.), *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition* Blackwell, Oxford, 1985). That the problems involved here (most obviously, but not only, homosexuality) go back to the earliest days of Christian monasticism is shown by a striking (but incomplete) fragment concerning 'evil friendship' attributed to Horsiesus, one of Pachomius' immediate successors: translated in A. Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia*, Vol. 3 (Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, 1982, pp. 145–151). In Buddhism, the detailed prohibitions on sexual misbehaviour in the Vinaya (e.g. III 28 ff.) leave little doubt that homosexuality was also a problem, but there is no evidence I know of to show that particular friendships were prohibited (see, e.g. Vin I 150), and equally none to suggest they were especially valued. [See text p. 114–5 and note 72 for the idea of 'good friendship'.] In relation to the distribution of materials there are warnings against favouritism to friends (e.g. Vin IV 154–5). For the issue in a wider sociological context see Eisenstadt and Roniger, *op. cit.*, note 55, pp. 286–7.

58 Nichomachean Ethics, Books 8 and 9, Eudemian Ethics Book 7. (On the relationship between these two treatments, see C. Rowe, *The Eudemian and Nichomachean Ethics: a study in the development of Aristotle's Thought*, the Cambridge Philological Society, 1971, Section 1, Chapter 5). See also Small, *op.cit.*, note 55, Chapter 1; J. Cooper, 'Aristotle on the forms of Friendship', in *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 30, 1976–7), pp. 619–48, and 'Friendship', and the Good', in *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 86, 1977, pp. 290–315 [a modified form of both of these articles appeared as 'Aristotle on Friendship' in Amelie O. Rorty (ed.) *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics* (University of California Press, 1980)]; J. Annas, 'Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism', in *Mind*, Vol. 86, 1977, pp. 532–44.

59 For detailed exemplification of these points, see Small, *op. cit.*, note 55, and Fiske, *op. cit.*, note 56. The most celebrated treatment of friendship in the medieval period is Ailred of Rievaulx's treatise (drawing on Cicero, Augustine and Ambrose) *Spiritual Friendship* (translated by M. E. Laker, Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, 1977).

60 One (influential) example from many is the opening of *The Rule of Saint Augustine* (translated by R. Canning, Introduction and Commentary by T. J. van Bavel, Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1984, pp. 11, 25 and 41–61).

61 J. Cassien, *Conferences*, edited and translated by E. Pichery, Vol. 3 (Les Editions du Cerf, Sources Chrétiennes, No. 64, pp. 14 ff. 18th Conférence, Chapters 5–6).

62 Standard histories are: D. Knowles, *Christian Monasticism*, (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1969); Patrice Cousin, *Précis d'histoire monastique* (Blond and Gay, 1956). In practical terms, 'the hermit life' was mainly lived *within* monasteries, with 'solitude' consisting in a greater degree of freedom from communal meals and communal liturgical activities.

63 This topic itself deserves a full-length study: among the major variables would be the physical size and geographical location of a monastery and the social background of its monks. For a specific comparison see E. Amand de Mendieta, 'Le système cénobitique basilien comparé au système cénobitique pachomien', in

Revue d'histoire des religions, Vol. 152, 1957, pp. 31–80, criticized for injustice to Pachomius by Rousseau, *Pachomius*, *op. cit.*, note 18, p. 77, n.1. A general context has been adumbrated by Jean Séguy, 'Pour une sociologie de l'ordre religieux', in *Archives des sciences sociales des religions*, Vol. 57, 1984, pp. 55–68, and 'Une sociologie des sociétés imaginées: monachisme et utopie', in *Annales*, Vol. 26, 1971, pp. 328–54; M. Hill, *The Religious Order* (Heinemann, London, 1973), Chapters 1–4; somewhat outdated but still stimulating is J. Wach, *Sociology of Religion* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944) Chapter 5.

64 See for instance *Athanasius' Life of St Anthony*, Chapter 14 (translated by R. C. Gregg, SPCK, London 1980, p. 43): 'the desert was made a city by the monks, who left their own people and registered themselves for the citizenship of the heavens'. This was used as a motto in Chitty, *op. cit.* note 16: see also Theodoret, quoted in S. Brock, *op. cit.*, note 24, p. 8, note 23; and *The Patristic Greek Dictionary*, s.v. *ouranopolitēs*, *politeia*, etc.

65 The burden of Basil's argument in Longer Rules 7 (translated by Clarke, *op. cit.*, note 56, pp. 163–6) is that 'communal life' (*Ho koinōnikos bios*) is preferable 'to solitude' (*to monazein*): in Rule 3 (ibid., p. 157) he argues, in connexion with the commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself, 'who does not know that man is a civilized and social being (*hēmeron kai koinōnikon zōon*) and not a solitary and savage one (*kai ouchi monastikon oude agrion*).' See further Small, *op. cit.* note 55, pp. 251 ff., who cites interestingly the Emperior Julian's reasons for opposing monks who leave their cities for the desert, despite the fact that 'man by nature is a civilized being who lives in community' (*ontos anthrōpou phusei politikou zōiou kai hēmerou*). Compare Aristotle's Politics (cited in note 45.)

66 See M. Black, 'The Tradition of Hasidean—Essene Asceticism: Its Origins and Influence', in *Aspects du Judéo-Christianisme*, (Colloque de Strasbourg 1964, Presses Universitaires de France, 1964); A. Guillaumont, 'Monachisme et éthique judéo-chrétienne, Chapter 4 of *Aux Origines*, cited in note 16. For the eschatology of the Qumran covenanters, see G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (Collins, London, 1977) esp. pp. 182 ff. (for the difficult question of the relationship between various ascetic movements at this time, the Essenes, Therapeutae, Qumran, etc., see Chapter 5), *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Penguin, London, 1962), especially pp. 47 ff. and 122–48.

67 J. Cassian, *Conferences* (cited in note 61), vol. II, pp. 221–47.

68 S I 87–9 and V 2–4.

69 See, for example, *Majjhima Nikāya* Suttas 15, 31, 48, 103, *Vināya Mahāvagga* 10, etc.

70 A I 66–7. On the notion of 'views' (*ditthiyo*) in Buddhism, see my *Selfless Persons*, Chapter 4.

71 M I 206. My translation abbreviates the passage by eliminating repetitions. The parallel here with the Greek/Christian idea of friends sharing a single mind or soul in different bodies is obvious and striking.

72 See my article '*Kalyānamitta* and *Kalyānamittatā*', in *The Journal of the Pali Text Society*, XI, 1986.

73 See D. Knowles, *From Pachomius to Ignatius* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1966), Chapter 9 'The Evolution of the doctrine of obedience'; Adalbert de Vogüé, *Community and Abbot in the Rule of St. Benedict* (Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, 1979), Chapter 4, 'Obedience'.

74 See Tönnies, *Community and Association* (translated by C. P. Loomis, RKP,

London, 1955). (The title is elsewhere rendered *Community and Society*, as in the Harper Torchbooks edition, New York, 1963.) I have learnt a great deal from the critical investigation of this dichotomy in J. Gusfield, *Community: a Critical Response* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1975), especially Chapter 4 'The Search for Community: Concepts as Utopias'. Robert Nisbet, in *The Social Philosophers* (Heinemann, London, 1974) investigates various different kinds of community—military, political, religious, etc. (Monasticism is discussed in Chapter 5, 'The Ecological Community', especially pp. 330–41)—in a somewhat generalized, at times idiosyncratic, but always stimulating way.

75 Although in this paper I emphasize this forward-looking orientation towards the heavenly life, it should be remembered (as Philip Rousseau has reminded me) that a great deal of monastic emphasis was also laid on *restoring* a *past* form of humanity and community. (See the works cited in notes 16 and 24; and for the theme more generally see Boas, *Essays on Primitivism*, cited in note 38, especially Chapter 2, 'The Original condition of Man: Patristic Period'.) In some respects, this difference in emphasis is irrelevant, because both past and future versions of the ideal society can equally well function as critiques of the present, and as presenting a model both for monastic practice and for speculation on the nature of society in general; but there are clearly important differences also—for instance, the past 'Golden Age' is sometimes Adam and Eve, or even Adam without Eve, where there clearly is little notion of a *society* at all—and a more nuanced treatment of the theme than I can present here would have to attend to them.

76 This brief caricature, of course, does no justice to any of the thinkers who may be labelled as, at least in part, social-contract theorists. But perhaps a caricature can bring out the outline features of the aspects I am concerned with more than could a fuller and subtler account. For an introduction, see E. Barker (ed.), *Social Contract: Essays by Locke Hume and Rousseau* (Oxford University Press, London, 1971), with a useful Introduction by the editor.

77 I have been delighted recently to read Peter Brown's article 'The Notion of Virginity in the Early Church', in McGinn and Meyendorff (eds), *Christian Spirituality* (cited in note 24), pp. 427–43. He stresses, *inter alia*, that the loss of virginity by marriage was 'an act of irrevocable recruitment into and possession by society' (p. 428); and that 'to uphold virginity, therefore, was to commit oneself, by implication, to a different image of the grounds of cohesion of society' (p. 429). In monasteries, and in the 'increasingly celibate upper clergy', one can see 'the need to create in the Church groupings that had all the solidarity, the will to survive over time, and the authority of a political community, and yet which pointedly lacked the one ingredient on which political communities had usually rested in the ancient world—the solid flesh and blood of family and kinship' (p. 431); and the foundation for this was 'the will of a gifted minority to construct a society that they could regard as a society based ideally on freedom of choice and not on the usual, "organic" bonds of a family-based society' (p. 432). Monastic communities in this sense lived out in practice an emphasis on forms of solidarity outside kinship which characterises the early church as an (ideological) whole: see his *The Making of Late Antiquity* (cited in note 18) pp. 15, 77–8, and *The Cult of The Saints* (The University of Chicago Press, 1981) p. 31. The idea (and ideal) of virginity, and particularly its relation to conceptions both of the Fall and of the *vita angelica*, is discussed by J. Bugge, *Virginitas: an essay in the history of a medieval ideal* (Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1975). See also D. Weinstein and R. M. Bell,

Saints and Society: the Two Worlds of Christendom 1000–1700 (University of Chicago Press, 1982), Chapter 3, 'Chastity'.

78 'Sex and Personal Identity: the Western Individualistic Tradition', in *Encounter*, Vol. 63(1), June 1984: quotations from pp. 53, 51 (I owe my knowledge of this excellent piece to Steven Lukes' 'Conclusion' in Carrithers *et al.*, cited in note 2, p. 299). Midgley cites a series of surprising (and depressing) pieces of evidence from Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant and others to prove that their conception of the individual political subject is indeed only that of a man. For further remarks on the exclusion of women—and of sexuality, seen bizarrely as somehow associated with women, *more* than men—from accounts of rationality see Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason* (Methuen, London, 1984), especially Chapter Two which deals with Plato, Philo, Augustine and Aquinas; and also Weinstein and Bell, *op. cit.*, note 77, pp. 234–6.

79 Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978), Vol. I, p. 50. Skinner argues that a decisive beginning to modern political reflection can be dated to the 12th century, when Arabic and then Latin translations of Aristotle's ethical and political works re-awakened interest in the conception of politics as wholly or mainly a *human* creation. Augustine is cited as an example of the intervening theocentric period. If I am right, then the monastic communities of this period may be seen as having kept alive at least some of the ideas of Greek political thought, in particular the developments of Plato and Aristotle found in the continuing Epicurean, Stoic and Cyric traditions of an ideal and/or small-scale utopian society of the wise. (For summary descriptions of these, and others in the ancient world, see J. Ferguson, *Utopias of the Classical World* (Thames and Hudson, London, 1975); and W. Tarn's remark, in *Hellenistic Civilisation* (3rd edition, with G. T. Griffith, Edwin Arnold, London, 1952), p. 330, that 'one might call [Epicurus' followers], spiritually, the first monks'.) It is true that monks were still highly theocentric, but monastic perfectionism repeatedly ran the risk—both individually and collectively—of succumbing to the kind of human pride and self-sufficiency which has come to be labelled 'Pelagianism'. See J. Passmore, *The Perfectibility of Man* (Duckworth, London, 1971), Chapters 5 'Pelagius and his Critics', and 6 'Perfectibility within Christianity: the Ascetico-Mystical Tradition'. For the same reasons I would reject Miriam Eliav-Feldon's suggestion (*Realistic Utopias: the ideal imaginary societies of the Renaissance 1516–1630*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1982, p. 5) that 'utopias became possible only when the *contemptus mundi* was rejected. When life on this earth was no longer regarded as a dark vestibule leading to the great hall of the next world, only then was the right of man to happiness on this earth recognized'.

80 See Small, *op. cit.*, note 55, Chapter 7, and R. P. Melchior Verheijen, *Saint Augustin*, in *Théologie de la vie monastique* (no editor given: Théologie 49, Aubier 1961).

81 Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981, Chapter 1, 'Utopia and the Ideal Society: in search of a definition'.

82 J. C. Davis, 'The History of Utopia: the Chronology of Nowhere', in P. Alexander and R. Gill (eds), *Utopias* (London, Duckworth, 1984) p. 8.

83 Ibid., p. 8.

84 Ibid., p. 9.

85 *Op. cit.*, note 81, p. 371, referring in a footnote to Weber, on whom see below, note 88.

86 F. E. Manuel and F. P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1979) discuss 'Western Monasticism and Utopia' directly (pp. 48–51), although unfortunately without any systematic presentation of evidence, and with an interpretation skewed by the legendary etymology/history of 'monk'/monasticism as intrinsically un-social.

87 For remarks on all these see the works of Davis and the Manuels cited in notes 81, 82 and 86. For the architectural influence, see Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (Penguin Books, London, 1966), Chapter 9, 'Cloister and Community' (e.g. p. 285, 'the monastery was in fact a new kind of *polis*'); for the American 19th century projects, see *inter alios* Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981), especially pp. 36 and 58–9, and more generally M. Holloway, *Heavens on Earth* (2nd edition Dover, New York, 1966), R. Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Harvard University Press, 1972) and J. McK. Whitworth, *God's Blueprints: a Sociological Study of Three Utopian Sects* (R.K.P., London, 1975).

88 For Max Weber, 'the man who, *par excellence*, lived a rational life in the religious sense was, and remained, alone the monk'. The 'continuity' between 'otherworldly monastic asceticism and active worldly asceticism . . . [is] a fundamental postulate of my whole thesis: the Reformation took rational Christian ascetism and its methodicial habits out of the monasteries and placed them in the service of active life in the world'; 'Christian asceticism, at first fleeing from the world in solitude, had already ruled the world which it had renounced from the monastery and through the Church. But it had, on the whole, left the naturally spontaneous character of daily life in the world untouched. Now it strode into the market-place of life, slammed the door of the monastery behind it, and undertook to penetrate just that daily routine of life with its methodicalness, to fashion it into a life in the world, but neither of nor for this world. (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, George Allen and Unwin, London 1930, pp. 120–1, 235, note 79, and p. 154). Thence, famously, Puritanism and Capitalism. I make no comment on the wider historical thesis save to say that Weber's studies in comparative religion, which were undertaken expressly to understand more clearly the religious foundations of modern western 'rationalism' (in economics and elsewhere), seem to me thoroughly, though perhaps not irretrievably, confused by the illicit generalisation of the Christian theological concept of 'the world'. For a very helpful commentary on Weber's notion of rationality, which is what concerns me here, see R. Brubaker, *The Limits of Rationality, An Essay on the Social and Moral Thought of Max Weber* (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1984).

89 Davis, *op. cit.*, note 81, p. 375. Compare Kanter, *op. cit.*, note 87, pp. 39–43.

90 See Manuel and Manuel, *op. cit.*, note 86, pp. 349–55.

91 M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (translated by A. Sheridan, Penguin Books, London, 1979). In a very helpful commentary on Foucault, Weber and others, B. S. Turner, in *Religion and Social Theory* (Heineman, London, 1983), Chapter 7, 'Individualism, Capitalism and Religion', usefully distinguishes between 'individualism', 'individuality' and 'individuation', which originate in 'Asceticism', 'Mysticism' and 'Monasticism' respectively: 'Individuation is associated . . . with the surveillance of large populations by bureaucratic means. In so far individuation involves a detailed control of the body, the disciplines of bureaucracy may have been prefigured by the monastic regulations of the Christian tradition. The monastery was the first 'total institution' of European Christendom, providing a model for subsequent timetables and schedules of regulation' (p. 164). The phrase

'total institution' is of course a gesture towards Erving Goffman's *Asylums* (Penguin Books, London, 1968), whose first chapter, 'On the Characteristics of Total Institutions', treats mental hospital and prisons from this point of view, with frequent references to monasticism.

92 See S. Lukes, 'Conclusion' in Carrithers *et al.*, *op. cit.* in note 2, pp. 294–5. A striking corroboration of this connection can be seen in the re-wakening of so-called 'eremitical' forms of monasticism by the Cistercians and others in the 11th and 12th-centuries. Much of the sensibility and 'humanistic' culture of these new forms of monasticism has been seen as an earlier, pre-Renaissance individualism: thus, most clearly, Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050–1200* (SPCK, London, 1972). But it has now been clearly shown that these forms of undoubtedly individualistic sensibility were produced by monastic movements which simultaneously proliferated new communal forms, and above all new Rules for the strict organization of these. See C. Bynum, 'Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?', in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 31, 1980, pp. 1–17 and C. Morris's reply, in the same volume, pp. 195–206. Bynum's article in rewritten form, appears in her *Jesus as Mother; Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (University of California Press, 1982) along with a companion piece, 'The Cistercian Conception of Community'. See also H. Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism* (Macmillan, London, 1984); and for background *L'Eremitismo in Occidente nei secoli XI e XII*, Miscellenea del Centro di Studi Medioevali IV (no editor given, Milan, 1965).

93 I do not offer detailed references here, because I am currently working on a monograph on the subject, which will, I hope, treat the issue thoroughly. Some relevant evidence found in Emmanuel Sarkisyanz, *Buddhist Backgrounds to the Burmese Revolution* (M. Nijhoff, The Hague, 1965); J. Chesneaux, 'Egalitarian and Utopian Traditions in the East', *Diogenes*, Vol. 62, 1968, pp. 76–102, of which pp. 89–93 deal with Buddhism (and depend heavily on Sarkisyanz); E. Mendelson, 'A Messianic Buddhist Association in Upper Burma', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 24, 1961, pp. 560–80; T. Stern, 'Ariya and the Golden Book: A Millenarian Buddhist Sect Among the Karen', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 27, 1967, pp. 297–327; K. Malalgoda, 'Millenialism in Relation to Buddhism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 12, 1970, pp. 424–41; Yoneo Ishii, 'A Note on Buddhist Millenarian Revolts in Northeastern Siam', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 6, 1975, pp. 121–6; Charles Keyes, 'Millenialism, Theravāda Buddhism and Thai Society, *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 36, 1977, pp. 283–302; Tambiah, *op. cit.*, note 15, pp. 293–320. See also Tambiah's review of Frank and Mani B. Reynolds, *Three Worlds according to King Ruang, a Thai Buddhist Cosmology* (University of California Press, 1982), published as 'The Buddhist Cosmos: Paradise Lost, Gained, and Transcended', in *History of Religions*, Vol. 24, 1984, pp. 73–81, especially pp. 78–9.

94 I can find no evidence to support Winston King's assertion, in his *In the Hope of Nibbana* (Open Court, Illinois, 1964), pp. 186, that 'like the monastic communities of Christendom, the Sangha is conceived to be the nearest possible approximation to the ideal social order possible in time and space' (cf. p. 193, 'the Sangha, the archetype of the "heavenly" social order of Nibbāna'). This seems to me pure a *priori* comparativism: elsewhere King is fully aware that *nibbāna/nirvāna* cannot be seen as a 'social' in any sense.

95 This is a point stressed in Ilana Friedrich Silber, '"Opting Out" in Theravāda Buddhism and medieval Christianity. A Comparative Study of Monasticism

Alternative Structure', *Religion*, Vol. 15, 1985, pp. 251–77. I have profited greatly from this paper, and would urge that it be read in conjunction with my own.

96 'Transcendental Visions—other worldliness—and its transformations. Some more comments on L. Dumont', *Religion*, Vol. 13, 1973, p. 10.

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STEALING THE SACRED SYMBOLS: BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IN THE PEOPLES TEMPLE AND THE UNIFICATION CHURCH

David Chidester

Perceptions of danger result not only from fear of defilement, but also from competing claims to the ownership of central symbols by forces on the periphery of a society. This article examines two peripheral movements often perceived as dangerous in American society during the 1970s—the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple—by concentrating on their appropriations and interpretations of one central complex of symbols: the Bible. Biblical interpretation is investigated as a strategic attempt to underwrite the legitimacy of acts of appropriation; issues of *meaning* serve more basic interests in ownership of the *power* of symbols. Four issues in biblical interpretation are explored. First, in establishing the nature of the text, the Unification Church appropriated the Bible as an open canon requiring closure, while the Peoples Temple claimed it as a closed canon requiring erasure. Second, in appropriating the text's beginning, the Unification Church claimed the primordial garden as a pattern to restore, while the Peoples Temple claimed it as a prison to escape. Third, in appropriating the text's end, both movements claimed to play a central role in the eschatological battle between good and evil, but the Unification Church identified evil in satanic communism, while the Peoples Temple identified it as antichrist capitalism. Finally, both movements can be located as interpretive communities in America of the 1970s. The Unification Church was engaged in a strategic recentering of civil and biblical symbols in order to claim a place in American civil space, while the Peoples Temple was undertaking a strategic decentering of civil and biblical symbols in order to configure an alienation from American society. That conflict of symbols revealed the ambivalence of appropriation and alienation that operates in religion. In this regard, religion may be redefined as the cultural process of stealing back and forth sacred symbols.

The Jonestown People's Temple was not religion—it was not even a religious cult. It was a Marxist commune rooted in the demonic philosophy of Communism, which has the goal of enslaving the entire world under the Marxist system, as in Jonestown.[1]

—*Unification Church*

Moon doesn't have anything to do with religion. It's a big business operation, plain and simple. . . . He's said over and over again that he wants to rule the world.[2]

—*Ted Patrick*

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INTRODUCTION

My epigraphs recall acts of denial that came out of religious conflict on the margins of American society in the 1970s. From different perspectives, these statements denied the legitimate religious status of two controversial movements of the decade—the Peoples Temple and the Unification Church.[3] The first was the official statement of the Unification Church in response to the event of Jonestown. Distancing the church of Sun Myung Moon from the horror, violence and madness represented by the Jonestown mass murder/suicides of November 18, 1978, the statement argued that any comparison between the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple was invalid. Conflating the two groups would be like confusing God's chosen Israelites with the ancient Canaanites who practiced human sacrifice and temple prostitution. A distinction had to be drawn: the Unification Church was a 'legitimate religious movement', the Peoples Temple was a 'cult'. Unificationists were certainly not alone in dismissing the religious status of the Peoples Temple. But it was strange to observe this official statement of the Unification Church vilifying another movement in much the same rhetoric of denial and danger under which Moonies themselves had suffered. The Unification Church had been singled out by that coalition of mainstream American religious leaders, politicians, mental-health professionals, lawyers and concerned families which has been labeled the 'anticult movement'.[4] In the immediate aftermath of Jonestown, the Unification Church almost seemed to be applying for admission into that anti-cult coalition. The second statement, however, indicates how the denial of legitimate religious status was pronounced against the Unification Church by a prominent figure in that coalition, the notorious anti-cult crusader, kidnapper and deprogrammer, Ted Patrick. The Unification Church was not a religion, Patrick insisted; it was big business, mental coercion, and political ambition that endangered American society. The anti-cult movement argued that the Unification Church was indeed a cult and that, as the anti-cultist Maurice Davis warned, 'the path of cults leads to Jonestown'. In anti-cult rhetoric, the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple were not religion, but were dangerous conspiracies bent on a totalitarian domination of the world.

Although relatively insignificant demographically, the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple provoked highly charged collective perceptions of danger in American society. They represented religious heresy, political subversion, and public dangers to mental health, family, community and nationalism in America. From a variety of vantage points, these movements were perceived as endangering religious and political investments that were central to American public life. Mary Douglas has encouraged us to interrogate danger in terms of defilement and to analyse defilement as the violation of collective systems of classification.[6] But perceptions of danger can also be located in the symbolic tensions between center and periphery in human societies. The symbolism of the center has been an important analytic concern in the academic study of religion. Analysis is not exhausted by cataloguing the types of symbolic centering devices, *omphaloi* or *axis mundi* that attracted the attention of Mircea Eliade.[7] Symbolism of the center may encompass an entire constellation of symbolic discourse and practice that occupies the center and animates the power relations of a particular social order. Appropriating, owning and operating such a central complex of symbols is to stand within what the humanistic geographer E. C. Relph called the 'existential insideness' of a society.[8] An investment in the ownership of central symbols is also an investment in the economic, political and other social interests that may revolve around those symbols. Movements on the periphery exist by definition in what Relph called the 'existential outsideness' of a society, alienated, estranged, but often at the same time in a symbiotic relationship with the central symbols that they may reject or from which they may be excluded. Perceptions of danger, therefore, arise not only through anxieties over defilement, but also by way of perceived threats to the personal or collective ownership of central symbols by forces on the periphery. From the boundary, the margin, the periphery of American society, the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple were dangerous because they made alternative claims on central American religious and political symbols and thereby threatened mainstream investments in those symbols.

A symbol is anything that has meaning to be interpreted and power to be appropriated; or, more accurately, a symbol is anything made meaningful through acts of interpretation and made powerful through acts of appropriation; or, more provocatively, a symbol is anything that allows meaningful interpretations to distract attention from more basic, powerful acts of appropriation. In other words, a symbol is not simply meaningful; it is powerful because it is appropriated, owned and operated. A preoccupation with the meaning of symbolic discourses and practices, however, may disguise their power. If power follows property, the power of sacred symbols lies in private and collective claims to their ownership. In order to explore one aspect of the symbolic tension between center and periphery in American society, I would like to isolate strategic claims to ownership made by the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple on one set of symbols—the Bible. That complex of symbols, it could be argued, has played a central role in American religious and political life.[9] Both movements claimed in radically different ways to have penetrated the text's central core and therefore to have appropriated its power. In examining biblical interpretation within these movements, I am not interested in hermeneutics as such. Rather, I would like to regard interpretation as an effort to underwrite the legitimacy of acts of appropriation. Conflicts over interpretation may reveal little more than the contested ownership of symbols. The battle for the Bible in America was one front on which the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple fought to define themselves and their place in American society. Rather than concluding that these groups had nothing to do with religion, I will suggest that they were particularly illuminating instances of religion as the cultural process of the stealing back and forth of sacred symbols.

ESTABLISHING THE TEXT

In June 1977 the National Council of Churches issued an attack on the biblical claims of the Unification Church in 'A Critique of the Theology of the Unification Church as Set Forth in *Divine Principle*'. That polemic was drafted by a committee comprised of a Roman Catholic, a Southern Baptist and two Presbyterians. Commenting on their report, Frank Flinn observed, 'I find it mildly amusing that these theologians, whose respective churches not so long ago labeled one another as "heretics", are now united in designating still another religious group as heretical and even non-Christian'.[10] The National Council of Churches declared its verdict: although the Bible was used in the *Divine Principle*, 'the use of biblical texts is arbitrary'. Unificationists apparently replaced the 'normative' authority of the Bible with the 'arbitrary' authority of Sun Myung Moon. Since arbitrary authority had no legitimacy, the Unification Church's claims on the Bible were discounted as invalid. The Peoples Temple also made claims on biblical symbols. The movement's letterhead bore witness of a commitment to social service certified by Matt. 25. But subsequent Christian attacks on the Peoples Temple countered by appropriating and mobilising Matt. 24:24—'For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets'—in order to envelop Jim Jones and his movement in a Christian demonology of satanic forces, false messiahs and the Antichrist.[11] Like the Unification Church, the Peoples Temple was accused of making illicit, illegitimate claims to the ownership of the Bible. These maneuvers on the battlefield of symbols revealed significant interests at stake in legitimating the ownership of the Bible. At stake was not simply the meaning of the biblical text, but its power, its authority, its normative force. An analysis of religious conflict over the ownership of the Bible may indicate the different interests that animated the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple in American society.

The definitive text for Unificationist biblical interpretation, the *Divine Principle*, was an extended, complicated, typological exegesis of the Bible.[12] In its general introduction, the book referred to itself as only part of a 'new truth' that promised to fulfill and complete the biblical text. There was considerable ambiguity about the nature of this 'truth' or 'Principle' or 'Divine Principle'. It was at once an old and a new truth. Truth was characterized as unique, eternal, unchangeable, and absolute. The Principle seemed to be an eternal pattern of redemption implicit in God's design for creation, approximated in the struggles of sacred history, and potentially fulfilled in these last days through the advent of a messiah. The Bible embodied this truth, but was not coextensive with it. 'The Bible', read the general introduction to the *Divine Principle*, 'is not the truth itself, but a textbook teaching the truth' (*DP*, 9). The biblical textbook was not absolute; rather it was incomplete. Since the Bible was unfinished, the 'new truth' was necessary to bring the text to completion. The *Divine Principle* seemed to stand as one part of that textual closure as the 'Completed Testament Word' (*DP*, 233). But the other part of the closure of revelation was the advent of God's messenger, Sun Myung Moon. This new, ultimate, final truth, not the result of 'man's synthetic research in the scriptures', appeared as a direct revelation from God (*DP*, 15). The embodied revelation in the person of the divine messenger promised that the wars of religion would end, 'as the divisions caused by differing interpretations of Biblical passages are broken down' (*DP*, 15). The battlefield of symbols would be pacified when 'the whole of mankind will become one people speaking one language, thus establishing one world of one culture' (*DP*, 536).

As a strategy of appropriation, the Unification Church opened the biblical text for new claims to ownership by arguing that it was already open, incomplete, and in need of closure. Typological exegesis was one way of negotiating that claim. Certainly, biblical typology had been important to early Christian claims on the relatively closed canon of the Hebrew Bible/Septuagint that allowed its texts to be opened for new appropriations. A closed canon was violated in order to establish new claims to ownership. The complete became incomplete; the closed became open; the old needed the new for its fulfillment.[13] The typological exegesis of the *Divine Principle* did not merely catalogue recurring patterns; it outlined patterns perceived to recur in a transformational, dispensational process throughout the course of human history. Since the biblical interpretation of the *Divine Principle* was intensely eschatological, the patterns and processes implicit in the Bible derived their ultimate meaning from the last days. The patterns of divine parenthood, perfect family relations, and the struggles between God-centered Abel-types and Satan-centered Cain-types were all given interpretive closure by the eschatological event. At the center of the cosmic drama of the last days stood the person of Sun Myung Moon. If the Bible were a single sentence, Moon was the period that gave the entire utterance closure and hence meaning. Moon owned the Bible because he owned that final punctuation mark that would reflexively give closure to the meaning of the text as a completed whole.

By way of contrast, Jim Jones did not offer a punctuation mark that promised to give closure to the biblical text; he worked to erase, defuse and reappropriate the power of the text.[14] In sermons on the Bible, Jones argued that the text was not a sacred revealed canon, but a book written in 1611 by

King James. King James was the author of the King James Bible. 'As mean a rascal that ever walked the earth', King James wrote the Bible in order to justify the slave trade between Africa and the Americas. According to Jones, King James sent the first slave ship to Africa, the 'Good Ship Jesus', to ensnare blacks in the twin bondages of enslavement and Christianity. 'How could a good book be written by such an evil man?', Jones demanded.

> [King James] was a slave-master, he was a drunk, he was an oppressive king, he was a practicing deviant of the worst nature, he bothered little children, he brought them into the court at will and made prisoners of them—King James, who wrote your Bible along with eighty other drunks just like him [Q973].

Spitting on the Bible, slamming it on the ground, jumping up and down on it, Jim Jones railed against 'the yellow pages of King James'. He attacked the Bible as a text of oppression. King James's lies, fairy-tales and silly stories were instruments of oppression that subjected blacks, women and the poor to white, capitalist domination. One element of the religious salvation Jones promised was liberation from the Bible.

First, the text oppressed blacks. Jones pointed to Noah's curse of Ham, 'that crazy parable that's in the Bible that was written by the slave-master, King James', as evidence of the Bible's discrimination against blacks (Q973).[15] Since about eighty percent of Temple membership was black, biblical passages concerning slavery had a special relevance. Jones argued that the Bible sanctioned slavery (Exod. 21:1–11), made slaves of the heathen (Lev. 25:44–6), instructed slaves to be content with their slavery (Phil. 4:11), and enjoined slaves to obey their masters in all things with fear and trembling (Col. 3:22; 1 Tim. 6:11; 1 Pet. 2:18). The Bible, Jones recalled, said that when asked to bear the Roman slave-master's pack for one mile, the Christian should carry it for two (Matt. 5:41). Jones, however, declared a new liberation. 'We've been carrying the slave-master's pack for two thousand years', Jones announced. 'Now we say it did not work and we won't carry the pack even one teensy-weensy damned inch!' (Q968). Biblical justifications of slavery had more than historical interest for the Peoples Temple. Jones insisted that white power interests in America continued to use the Bible to discriminate against blacks and that 'they're going to use the Bible to reinaugurate slavery' (Q952). Jones would use the Bible to free blacks from biblically based oppression.

Second, the text oppressed women. Jones argued that the treatment of women in the Bible was the result of 'some quirky ideas of King James because he was out compensating for his homosexuality' (Q1059, part I King James did not want males and females to live in genuine companionship based on equality, so he made up the biblical narrative of Adam and Eve to reinforce an inferior status for women. In Jones's re-reading of Genesis, God defecated, shaped his shit, and breathed life into it. Adam (which Jones insisted literally meant 'shit' in Greek) woke up and said, 'I feel like shit'. God then plucked a little bit of shit out of Adam's side in order to make Eve. 'That's all you women have ever been,' Jones exclaimed, 'a little side-shit. . . . Women are not treated like the whole piece of shit' (Q1059, part 6). The association of women with sin and the fall exacerbated the oppression of women. 'You women had to be down scrubbing the floors and licking somebody's boots,' Jones argued, 'because you're supposed to have taken the apples and give 'em to that stupid Adam' (Q1059, part 1). Jones would reclaim and invert that myth that had contributed to the oppression of women.

Third, the text oppressed the poor. The King James Bible contained what Jones called 'that silly scripture, "The poor will be with you always" (Jn. 12:8)' (Q1053, part 1). The Bible reinforced inequalities in the distribution of wealth and served to maintain the poor in their poverty. Despite his rejection of the lies of the Bible, Jones was not averse to citing a particular biblical passage when it served his revolutionary purposes. As we shall see, some of his biblical improvisations were quite inventive. In a brief homily on Psalms 113:7, for example, Jones appropriated a biblical text to deal with poverty in America. 'Who is like unto God?', Jones quoted. 'He that raises up the poor out of the dust, and liftest up the needy out of the shit-hill.' Responding immediately to his slight revision of the English text, Jones insisted, 'I saw shit-hill right in the Bible.' The word dung, he informed his audience, meant shit. In the Greek, in the Jewish, in the Portuguese languages, he said, this was the worst of all possible words. Paul had used it in the New Testament to describe the false religions, the institutionalised churches, and the world of capitalist sin. 'I call it all dung,' Jones quoted the Apostle Paul, 'that I might know Christ, the revolution' (Phil. 3: 7). And what was the particular shit-hill in which his listeners found themselves? It was the poverty enforced by white power interests in America. The Bible reinforced those oppressive power interests. But selected texts could be appropriated to undermine the oppression that the Bible supported. 'We've been in the honkey's shit-heap', Jones declared. But with the revolution at work in the Peoples Temple, he announced, 'now we've got something that belongs to us' (Q956). What members of the Peoples Temple had was God. And one way they could know it was God was through this hint in the Bible: God would lift them out of poverty and oppression. That God, in a body, was Jim Jones.

In establishing the text of the Bible, the *Divine Principle* defined it as an open testament to the design of Principle; but that text had to be given closure in the person of Sun Myung Moon. The Bible was a valid revelation, but ultimately validated only through the 'new truth' of the last days. The Unification Church owned the Bible because only the Lord of the Second Advent could give the text its necessary closure. In contrast, Jones invalidated the biblical text as a deception perpetrated by tyrannical, oppressive and immoral power interests. It was a closed canon that reinforced white power and black enslavement. Nevertheless, exegetical improvisations were still possible that allowed Jones to maneuver in the field of biblical symbols. Transposed into a very different key, Jones conducted exegetical operations on the Bible like Thomas Jefferson who, with scissors and paste, cut up his Bible to extract and reassemble the 'diamonds' from the 'dung-hill' of revelation.[16] Jones would have approved of that last metaphor. But the 'diamonds' Jones extracted were radically re-read so that the original text was basically erased, and only its trace remained to suggest that he had appropriated the power of the Bible and made it his own.

REPEATING THE PRIMORDIUM

Northrop Frye once observed that the Bible is a text that begins in a garden and ends in a city.[17] As a whole, the Bible may be owned by appropriating its beginning and its end. The primordial garden and the eschatological city of a new heaven and earth were powerful biblical symbols appropriated by the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple. The *Divine Principle* was preoccupied with the conditions of restoration by which the original divine plan for the primordial garden and the primordial human family could be re-established. The sermons of Jim Jones, however, were less concerned with restoring, repeating, or re-enacting a *primordium*. Jones was obsessed with anticipating an imminent nuclear cataclysm that would bring human history to an end, but at the same time promised to liberate humanity from the cycles of oppression that history represented. While there may have been differences in emphasis, both the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple appropriated biblical symbols of the *primordium* and the *eschaton* in order to negotiate an orientation in time that placed them at the center of an unfolding cosmic drama. Moon and Jones could both locate their movements by looking back to the *primordium* and forward to the *eschaton*.

According to the *Divine Principle*, the primordial creation followed a pattern—a design that may have been the Principle itself, but I find this unclear—called the 'Four Position Foundation'. The four positions in this pattern were 'origin', 'division', 'union', and 'action'. This terminology was employed in the *Divine Principle* with a technical, scientific flavor. The four positions were referred to as 'O-D-U action'. They were seen to be at work in all of creation. This pattern accounted for what might be called the deep structure of the world; variety was due to the 'varied orbit, form, state, direction, angle and speed of individual give and take action' (*DP*, 35). In what must appear as highly obscure language, the *Divine Principle* explained how the four positions formed the underlying pattern of the universe:

> When, according to origin–division–union (O-D-U action), the origin has divided into two separated substances of subject and object which have again united into one body, four positions are formed. One takes a subjective position while the

> remaining three stand as objects, thus producing three objective bases. When they enter into give and take action among themselves, one of the four positions assumes the role of subject, while the other three fulfill their objective purposes respectively [*DP*, 31–2].

While these positions were held to organise all 'give and take action'—between husband and wife, between individual and society, between government and people, and among the nations of the world—they were applied directly in the *Divine Principle* to an interpretation of the biblical account of creation in Genesis. The blueprint for the primordial creation of humans followed these four positions: God was origin; Adam and Eve were division; their conjugal relations were union; and their offspring was the action that was intended to produce a God-centered family. The whole universe was originally designed to revolve around this God-centered, perfect family; but the universe became decentered through the fall of the first humans.

In explaining the fall, the *Divine Principle* introduced a novel reading of the biblical text. But more important, it claimed a privileged ownership of the relevant passages of the Bible by asserting that 'until the present era, not a single man has known the root of sin' (*DP*, 66). This new 'knowledge' carried power over the biblical text. It claimed the text on behalf of those who held this new key that would unlock its meaning. The origin of sin and the fall was not disobedience to God's command as such; the *Divine Principle* explicitly rejected any reading of Adam and Eve's confrontation with the permitted Tree of Life and the prohibited Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil as a test of human obedience (*DP*, 67). Through an allegorical transposition, the *Divine Principle* insisted that these trees were actually symbols of Adam and Eve themselves. The Tree of Life represented perfected manhood, in this case, Adam, but with echoes of the 'second Adam' symbolised by the Tree of Life in other books of the Bible (Prov. 13:12; Rev. 22.14). If the Bible referred to Jesus as a vine (John 15:5), or an olive tree (Rom. 11:17), why not Adam as the Tree of Life? And if one tree symbolised manhood, the other must symbolise womanhood. 'The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which was described as standing with the Tree of Life (Gen. 2:9)', the *Divine Principle* concluded, 'was thus the symbol of Eve' (*DP*, 69). Carrying this allegorical exegesis further, the 'fruit' of Eve was read to signify her 'love'. Rather than enjoying the good 'fruit' of conjugal love with Adam, Eve was tempted to have a 'blood relationship with the angel [Satan] through her evil love centered on him' (*DP*, 74). The serpent in the garden was identified as Satan, who was identified with the fallen angel, Lucifer. In her immaturity Eve responded to Lucifer's advances, and they 'had sexual intercourse with each other through their give and take action (Gen. 3:5–6)' (*DP*, 79). The original sin, therefore, was not merely disobedience; it was adultery. When Eve subsequently 'joined' with Adam, that conjugal relation was already defiled by Eve's prior adultery so that their union was centered on the serpent/Satan/Lucifer.[18] The original human family fell from the God-centered plan to become the ancestors of a Satan-centered lineage. Adam and Eve's descendents were children of the devil (John 8:44), a brood of vipers, that is, sons of Satan (Matt. 3:7; 12:34; 23:33), and a humanity under the sovereignty of Satan (John 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4). Jesus appeared as messiah in order to restore the original pattern, according to the *Divine Principle*, by marrying and becoming the True Parent as a model for God-centered families. Jesus failed in this mission, however, because he was inadvertently crucified. Therefore, another messiah, a second advent, was required to accomplish the restoration of the primordial pattern. 'Upon the Second Advent of the Lord as the True Parent of mankind,' the *Divine Principle* promised, 'all men will come to live harmoniously in the garden as one family' (*DP*, 129). This messiah would bring humanity back to the garden.

In the sermons of Jim Jones, the garden of Eden was not a primordial paradise to restore, but a primordial prison from which to escape. In a standard sermon that he claimed to give every six months in order to get rid of the more conventionally religious members of his congregation, Jones improvised his own version of the biblical creation narrative. Jones's sermon seemed to be part of a larger project of disempowering the biblical text in order to appropriate its power for himself and his community. The uproarious laughter that met almost every line of his sermon, Jones told his audience, was good medicine for their souls. Laughter would liberate them from biblical myths that had them brainwashed. In re-reading Genesis, Jones insisted that he was not talking about the *true* God; rather, he was referring to 'the God of the old King James Bible'. In various sermons Jones called the biblical God the 'Sky God', the 'Mythological God', the 'Unknown God', the 'Spook', or the 'Buzzard'. He argued that such a god did not exist, but if it did it would be guilty of enormous crimes against humanity. The biblical Sky God appeared in the sermons of Jim Jones as an evil, egomaniacal, tyrannical and grotesque caricature of a cosmic creator. In the theology of Jim Jones, however, there was a *real* God. Jones insisted that God was Principle, Principle was love, and love was 'each according to their ability to each according to their need'.[19] This genuine God was a Principle with paranormal and practical dimensions; it was a love that would revolutionise human social relations; it was 'God Almighty, Socialism'. Jones's re-reading of the Genesis account of creation seemed designed to disempower the biblical imagery of the Sky God in order to clear a space for his followers to imagine a real God that was socialism.

In the beginning, Jones recounted, the Sky God started creating by spitting out stars and planets in all directions. God was lonely. There was no Mama God. The Sky God did not want to create another God for fear that he would be hit by the same kind of stars and planets that he had been spitting out, so he decided to create some angels to worship him. 'Well, I think I'll fix me up a few little ol' dingy-dingies,' the Sky God said, 'just little old creatures, who'll walk around and tickle my toes, and when I say, "Move!" they'll say, "Yas suh!"' So, according to Jones's creation story, the Sky God produced angels by farting. These were small controlled farts, Jones informed his listeners, because the Sky God did not want these little farts to get as big and tough as he was. The Sky God said to these angels, 'You sing Hosannas, or I'll bust your ass!' And all the cherubim and the seraphim sang 'Hossana' to the Sky God. But at this point, Jones continued, the Sky God farted too quickly and produced Lucifart. 'He farted too quick on that one', Jones declared. 'That was a loose fart, and they called him Lucifer'. Jones assured his listeners that the original name of this angel had been shortened in Hebrew and Greek to Lucifer. 'But what it was,' Jones clarified, 'was a loose fart. You see, all the rest of them had been controlled farts, but that was a loose fart'. This most beautiful angel, Lucifart, refused to sing Hosannas, to say Amen, or to obey the commands of the Sky God. 'Let's get away from this fool,' Lucifart said to the other angels, 'and go up and sit in our own place where we can fart free'. Lucifart led one-third of the angels away from the Sky God down to earth where they could be free from his dictatorial control. Jones concluded this part of his creation narrative by relating that 'Lucifart led all the other controlled farts out and they went out and started doing their own farts on a little ol' pile of shit . . . called earth' (Q1059, part 5). This revolt of Lucifer (or Lucifart in the angelology of Jim Jones) was a kind of mythic *primordium* in the sense that it represented an imaginative account of the first revolutionary act against the cruel, tyrannical and oppressive domination represented by the Sky God. In a sense, this primordial revolutionary act was recapitulated in the ongoing activities of the Peoples Temple in the name of a socialist revolution in America.

Lucifart continued as the hero of Jones's rendition of the biblical story of Adam and Eve's fall from paradise. The Sky God created the first humans out of shit, Jones said, and wanted to leave them in a state of ignorance in which they would not know the difference between right and wrong. Also, the Sky God did not care whether Adam and Eve starved. The Sky God commanded them not to eat any fruit from the tree in the garden. In omitting the Tree of Life from the garden, Jones left only the Tree of Knowledge in his version of the Genesis story. Eve proved herself to be more loving than the Sky God, because at least she wanted to find something for Adam to eat. Before Eve could pick the apple she saw hanging from the tree in the garden, the Sky God yelled, 'If you eat that damn apple, the day you eat is the day you die, bitch!' At that moment, Lucifart, that beautiful angel, that wise fellow, as Jones described him, appeared in the garden and told Eve not to pay any attention to that 'omniscient fart'. The Sky God, Lucifart told her, only wanted Adam and Eve to remain in ignorance without the divine knowledge of good and evil. 'God is afraid that when you eat that apple,' Lucifart informed Eve, 'you will be like the gods. He doesn't want you to be like him. He wants you to stay down here sniffing his shit.' Jones paused in the narrative at this point to pose the central dilemma of the story: The Sky God told Adam and Eve that if they ate from the tree, they would die. Lucifart, the snake, told them that if they ate, they would live and be like gods. 'Who told the truth?', Jones demanded. 'The snake! Because they ate the damned apple, and they got out, and went to bed with each other, and had two kids. Hey!' (Q1059, part 1). The fall, therefore, was not a fall; it was an escape from the primordial prison of Eden. Jones appropriated the biblical text in this instance through a strategic inversion of its elements: the Sky God deceived, Lucifart told the truth; Eve did not sin, she gained liberating knowledge for herself and Adam; and liberating knowledge was more important than obedience to the tyrannical authority of the Sky God. However ridiculous its depiction, this *primordium* could stand as a symbolic model for all revolutionary acts against oppressive authority.

ANTICIPATING THE ESCHATON

Eschatology was a prominent feature in both the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple. Both movements revolved around a messianic figure, divided the world into forces of absolute goodness and evil, and anticipated an imminent cosmic battle between those forces. They were apocalyptic movements with a difference: while their cosmic dualisms may have been drawn on roughly the same geopolitical divide, their messiahs operated on different sides of that line. The forces of good and evil were arrayed on either side of the divide between the first and second worlds. But Moon claimed the role of spiritual and material savior of America and all other 'God-centered democracies' in their final battle against satanic communism, while Jones assumed the mantle of a socialist messiah in direct paranormal contact with the spirit of God Almighty, Socialism at work in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and any place in the world where the international revolution against the capitalist Antichrist was being waged. Biblical interpretations in both movements, therefore were fashioned in anticipation of the *eschaton*.

The *Divine Principle's* typology of Abel-types and Cain-types provided the basic structure for organising history as a struggle between God-centered and Satan-centered forces. Not only could biblical history be organised according to that typology, but the entire course of world history followed its pattern. The second half of the *Divine Principle* was devoted to a complex dispensational outline of human history that revealed the "course of the providence of restoration" (*DP*, 230). Each dispensation was two thousand years: Adam to Abraham; Abraham to Jesus; Jesus to the Second Advent; and, finally, the 'Completed Testament Age in the perfection stage' into which the world had apparently entered with the coming of the new messiah. Each period required that certain conditions be met to lay the foundations for restoration, but at every stage failure resulted from conflicts between Cain-type and Abel-type persons. 'There are always two types of persons;' the *Divine Principle* noted, 'namely, Cain-type and Abel-type. Therefore, in order to restore all these to the original position of creation, the Cain-type person must obey and surrender to the Abel-type person' (*DP*, 246). The entire course of history, in this reading, had been a kind of extended family conflict between God-centered and Satan-centered persons. It had also been a history of failure. In every period, Cain-types refused to obey. In the first stage, they refused to obey the father (Adam, Noah, Abraham) intended to head a God-centered family; in the second stage, they refused to obey the father (Moses) designated to head a God-centered family and a God-centered nation; in the third stage, they rejected the father (Jesus) who was supposed to be the head of a God-centered family, a God-centered nation and a God-centered world; the final stage would set all this right. Family, nation, and world would be unified around a single, divinely anointed father.[20]

World history—the Reformation, the Renaissance, Imperialism, the rise of democracies, and two world wars—had been preparing the world for the reception of this messiah by laying the religious, political and economic foundations for his advent. During the last four hundred years, Cain and Abel types not only struggled in these areas, but also in the arena of ideology. Exemplars of Cain-type ideology were catalogued in the *Divine Principle*: René Descartes, Francis Bacon, Edward Herbert, D. F. Strauss, Ludwig Feurbach and Karl Marx. Rationalism, empiricism, deism and left-wing Hegelianism all contributed to laying the foundation for a Cain-type ideology centered on Satan. 'Afterwards', the *Divine Principle* suggested, 'the Cain-type view of life matured to form the communist world today' (*DP*, 461). The Abel-type view, however, also had its representatives: Kant, Fichte, Hegel (apparently only the right-wing Hegel), Philip Spener, George Fox and Emanuel Swedenborg were cited. While this inference may seem a considerable leap from the arcane visions of Swedenborg, the *Divine Principle* concluded that 'in this manner, the Abel-type view of life has matured to form the democratic world of today' (*DP*, 463). This four hundred years of social and ideological preparation was important because it typologically duplicated the four hundred years between the return from Babylonian exile and the advent of Jesus in Israel. The early Christians constituted what the *Divine Principle* called a 'second Israel'; a 'third Israel' would be blessed with the new messiah.

In the last days, the Cain and Abel family struggle of human history had become focused in the cosmic and ethical dualism of Satan-centered communist nations locked in final combat with God-centered democracies. According to the *Divine Principle*, the messiah must appear on the battle line of this cosmic conflict. The nation of the messiah 'must be God's front line and Satan's front line' (*DP*, 523). And what was that front line? The 38th parallel of Korea. 'Naturally,' the *Divine Principle* insisted, 'this 38th parallel is the very front line for both democracy and communism, and, at the same time, the front line for both God and Satan' (*DP*, 524). The messiah would appear, as Jesus had promised, where 'the eagles will be gathered together' (Luke 17:37). The Satanic communist eagles had gathered in Korea to wage a battle of eternal life and death. Korea had other virtues that made it the appropriate home for the messiah: Korea was the object of God's heart, it had suffered more than any other nation, it contained the fruition of every aspect of culture and civilisation, its people had long expected, since the Yi Dynasty, the appearance of a King of Righteousness in their midst. One biblical proof-text was invoked by the *Divine Principle* to seal the case for Korea. Rev. 7:2–4 related that another angel ascended from the rising sun to mark the chosen servants of God. Since the sun rises in the east, this biblical prophecy must refer to China, Japan and Korea. China could be ruled out because it was a nation under satanic communism; Japan could be eliminated because of its history of persecuting Christians in Korea; therefore, by process of elimination, Korea emerged as the only possible biblically mandated home for the messiah (*DP*, 519–21). From this evidence, the *Divine Principle* concluded, 'the Korean people will become the "Third Israel", God's chosen elect' (*DP*, 521). The messiah of that chosen nation was expected to play the central role in the unification of the world after the inevitable World War III. Two world wars had succeeded in clearly dividing Satan-centered communism from God-centered democracy; this final war would unite them by subjugating the Cain-types (and apparently the Abel-types as well) to the messianic rule of the new 'Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.'

The Peoples Temple also operated in a world poised between cosmic forces of good and evil. Biblical imagery was deployed by Jim Jones to symbolise these two forces. In his sermons, Jones transposed Christian symbols into the vocabulary of socialism so that God became 'God Almighty, Socialism', Christ became 'revolution,' and Jesus became 'justice'. Divine Socialism was perceived to be at work in the Soviet Union, China and Cuba. These nations were described by Jones as socialist utopias embodying the same Principle—in its practical and paranormal dimensions—that the Peoples Temple enjoyed. If socialism underwent an apotheosis to become God Almighty, Socialism, capitalism also was elevated to a cosmic status as a force of absolute evil contending against Divine Socialism. In one sermon, Jones wrapped this contest in the biblical imagery of Revelation:

> Any system that fights against [socialism] is against God. So, who is fighting against socialism? You are sitting in the midst of the anti-God system: American capitalism. Who has murdered God all over the world? America's system is

representative of the mark of the Beast and America is the Antichrist [Q1055, part 4].

In America, the Peoples Temple found itself under the premillennial reign of the Antichrist. Like the *Divine Principle*, the sermons of Jim Jones clearly defined the battle line between the cosmic and ethical forces of good and evil in the world. The Peoples Temple, however, expected God-centered socialism to emerge in the communist world because it was there that Divine Socialism was already at work to bring about a new heaven on earth.

In keeping with his transpositions of Christian vocabulary, Jones could claim to be messiah because he regarded himself as a fully self-realised socialist mobilising a revolution for social justice. 'I am the only fully socialist', Jones proclaimed, 'I am the only fully God' (Q1053, part 1). He made some fairly extraordinary claims on behalf of the paranormal powers of socialism. Healing, raising the dead, telepathy, and other supernatural abilities were all manifestations of Divine Socialism that Jones claimed to be able to demonstrate. But the point of all these powers was a socialist reorganisation of human society based on Jones's interpretation of the biblical suggestion that 'God is love'. When God Almighty, Socialism was present, private ownership of property, inequalities in the distribution of wealth, and all the evils of racism, classism, sexism, ageism and exploitation would disappear. Love would become the organising principle of social relations. In these terms, Jones could claim to be the messiah because he was the living embodiment of the paranormal and practical powers of Divine Socialism. Claiming to have been crucified with Christ, the revolution, Jones insisted that all that was left was Principle, a spirit that had already been manifested in the event of Pentecost. 'The life I now live,' Jones declared, 'I live through this great Principle, the Christ, the socialist Principle that was on the day of Pentecost when it said, "God is love, and love means they have everything in common"' (Q1059, part 1). Recognising that his messianic claims might sound crazy, Jones declared: 'You can call me an egomaniac, megalomaniac, or whatever you wish, with a messianic complex. I don't have a complex, honey, I happen to know I'm the messiah' (Q1059, part 1). Although his messianic announcement could certainly be demythologised in socialist terms, Jones nevertheless made supernatural claims about his origin. Like Sun Myung Moon, Jones was a messiah from an unexpected place. Assuming the role of black liberator, Jones claimed that although his parents were white, he had miraculously been born black because his mother had made telepathic contact with a higher vibration of black consciousness in the universe. That vibration was from a more highly evolved planet than this earth. Jones explained: 'I come from another planet. That's it. That's simple enough' (Q1035). Simple or not, Jones assured his audience that the Bible contained evidence of extraterrestrial visitations from other planets in Ezekiel's vision of wheels within wheels and the event of

Pentecost. On each visit, the more highly evolved socialists from outer space brought the same message: 'The way to live is to sell all your possessions and have all things in common and impart to every man as has need' (Q1035). Jones promised that he could get his followers to those more highly evolved planets, but first they had the responsibility of making this world into a socialist kingdom of heaven on earth.

That eschatological transformation, however, was not solely the responsibility of the Peoples Temple. Forces at work in the unfolding drama of human history were about to bring that history to a cataclysmic end in a nuclear apocalypse. Members of the Peoples Temple were promised that they would see 'a confrontation that will be the world of fire, the Apocalypse, the burning elements' (Q1022). As in most apocalyptic scenarios, the prevailing social order was expected to be inverted in the nuclear *eschaton*. 'America was first and it will be last', Jones declared in one sermon. 'It will suffer worse in this war than all other nations, for its government does not love its people' (Q1059, part 5). The Peoples Temple anticipated a complete destruction of America in the nuclear apocalypse. The symbols of American capitalism would be obliterated. The bomb 'will have blown away the Nixons, and the Kissingers, and the Rockefellers, and the Duponts', Jones announced in one sermon; and he welcomed this cleansing of the world of antichrist capitalists. 'I'd be glad to be blown away too', Jones exclaimed, 'just to see them blown away' (Q1059, part 5). Later, in Jonestown, Jones struck a similar note by observing that in the nuclear war 'those honkies we hate, and ought to, those oppressors are all gonna be wiped out' (Q981). But the nuclear *eschaton* did not only promise destruction; it guaranteed redemption. Jones assured his audience that the Soviet Union, China and Cuba had made preparations with caves, fallout shelters, radioactive shields and radioactive medications that would allow them to emerge victorious from the final nuclear war. After the capitalists were destroyed, only socialists would be left. In proleptic expectation of that victory, Jones proclaimed, 'Already socialism has won the victory over the world . . . Hallelujah, socialism!' (Q1059, part 5). While in California, Jones spoke of a cave in Redwood Valley that would protect his community from the 'nuclear hell' (Q958); later, Jones would describe Jonestown in Guyana as a 'zone of protection' from the nuclear apocalypse (Q981). The Peoples Temple expected to be saved in the nuclear *eschaton* to participate in the socialist redemption of the world.

Like the Unification Church, the Peoples Temple anticipated a final Armageddon between forces of good and evil that would result in the establishment of a heaven on earth. Correlating biblical symbols with this event, both movements could claim that they owned the Bible because they had appropriated the power of its beginning and its end. Recapitulating the biblical *primordium*, the Unification Church's 'blessed marriages' and the Peoples

Temple's revolutionary action drew authentication from the text's beginning. Anticipating the *eschaton*, both movements claimed exclusive, privileged ownership of the new heaven, new earth recorded as the Bible's end. The Unification Church and the Peoples Temple had very different expectations, however, about America's role in the final cosmic drama. Since both movements operated in America in the 1970s, those different expectations were important in determining the social location of each community in American civil space.

LOCATING THE INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITY

One context in which these two movements were located in the United States was certainly the history of American ambivalence about communism. Periodic 'red scares' in 1919–20, 1938–39, and the McCarthy Cold War era of 1950–54 represented rhythmic intensifications of a fairly continuous perception in 20th century American society of the danger of competing claims to 'ownership' of America by forces beyond the periphery.[21] The Cold War mythos of the 1950s—still evident in Ronald Reagan's assertion that the Soviet Union remained an 'evil empire' and 'the focus of evil in the world'—permeated American civil space.[22] At the same time, however, one important indicator of alienation in American society has been the attraction of Americans to socialist utopias.[23] The worldviews of the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple were negotiated in this highly charged symbolic landscape. Although they emerged into public prominence as leaders of 'new religions' of the 1970s, both Moon and Jones began their ministries in the context of the 1950s Cold War conflict between America and the Soviet Union. Moon's anticommunism and evangelism were apparently forged in his experiences in a North Korean prison camp. At about the same time, Jones began his pentecostal–social activist ministry while most Americans were still reeling from the 'loss' of China, the first Soviet atomic test, the Korean War, and the suspicion of 'Reds' in government, media and education during the McCarthy hearings. In Korea and in Indiana international political tensions were formative in these new ministries. Superpower political conflict continued to dominate the arena of religious symbols in the movements founded by Rev. Moon and Rev. Jones. Moon remained an ardent anti-communist, Jones a self-proclaimed communist and socialist messiah.

A second context in which symbolic appropriation operated within the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple was the history of highly charged social and institutional classifications of race. One of the virtues of America, Sun Myung Moon insisted in his June 1976 speech at Yankee Stadium, was that it had been a melting pot of all races. Because God had intervened in American history, 'all the different races and nationalities of the world harmonised upon this land to create God-centered families, churches, and the nation of America.' 'Transcending nationality and race', America was a microcosm of the world and at the same time a divinely ordained model for the world.[24] Moon's arranged, large scale 'blessed marriages' seemed to be intentionally inter-racial; like America, the new heaven on earth would feature inter-racial harmony. By 1981, Moon may have revised his position on racial harmony in the United States. After his indictment for tax fraud, Moon made a speech in December of that year about his predicament:

> I would not be standing here today if my skin were white and my religion were Presbyterian. I am here today only because my skin is yellow and my religion is Unification Church. The ugliest things in this beautiful country of America are religious bigotry and racism . . . Why are we singled out? Simply because our name is Unification Church and the founder happens to be a Korean, a yellow man.[25]

Although the *Divine Principle* had argued the necessity of a Korean messiah, Moon's speech seemed to suggest that his ethnic origin was merely a historical accident that had unexpectedly aroused American racism. Jones and the Peoples Temple, however, never had any illusions about racism in America. America was consistently described as a country of institutionalised racism in which 'the most racist institutions are the churches' (Q1035). America was symbolised in the sermons of Jim Jones as a region of imprisonment and pollution. 'To live in America with all of its hate, and its violence, and its crime, its disorderliness, its racism, its bigotry, its anti-Semitism—that's a prison in itself' (Q1057), part 5). Like the primordial prison of Eden, life in America was a domain of imprisonment under the oppression of facism. American society was also a defiling, polluted space. 'We feel *dirty* sitting in America', Jones declared in one sermon (Q1055, part 4). 'Wear this world as a loose garment', he advised in another. 'Wear this old, rotten, stench-ridden, racist America as a loose garment' (Q1053, part 1).

Global political conflict and internal racial conflict were not merely *contexts* in which the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple operated; these conflicts were powerful forces through which both movements negotiated a place in American society. Cold War and racism, it might be suggested, have been the interstices of worldview formation in America at least since the 1950s. Adapting suggestions in the work of Robert Redfield, a worldview might be defined as a set of discursive, practical and social strategies for negotiating the classification of persons and orientation in time and space.[26] These two dimensions—classification and orientation—operate in any worldview as the conditions within which human *person* and *place* may be negotiated. A human identity may be negotiated by factoring out certain entities as fundamentally 'not like us'—superhuman entities, perhaps to be worshipped, and subhuman entities to be excluded from the universe of morally protected persons. In American society, the mythos of geo-political conflict and the mythos of race have informed negotiations over the classification of persons into categories 'like us' and 'not like us'.[27] The Unification Church and the Peoples Temple—in radically different ways, as we have seen—experimented in negotiating human identities along these highly charged lines of classification. In addition, these movements negotiated different orientations in time and space. Overcoming what Eliade once called 'the vertigo brought on by disorientation', they employed temporal and spatial strategies to locate person in place.[28] We have already seen how they negotiated an orientation in time by claiming ownership of a biblical history of restoration or liberation. Spatial orientation was also important in negotiating a place for these movements, particularly as they operated in American society. Different strategies were deployed—strategies I would like to call recentering and decentering—to locate these interpretive communities in America.

The Unification Church attempted to negotiate a recentering of American civil space by appropriating what might be regarded as the central complex of American civil religious symbols. Returning to Moon's bicentennial speech at Yankee Stadium, we get some idea of how Moon tried to claim the central symbols of American civil religion. America was conceived by God, created by God and guided by God's intervention. In keeping with a longstanding tradition of American civil millennialism, Moon declared that the United States itself had a messianic role by announcing that 'God anointed America with oil'. But Moon did not come to Yankee Stadium merely to praise America; he also brought a dire warning. If America did not remain faithful to its civil religious destiny, God would leave America. God's departure from American civil space, Moon warned, would be 'the perfect opportunity for the evil of communism to overtake America'. As if Moon had read Robert Bellah's 1967 article on civil religion, he spoke of three times of national trial—the Revolution, the Civil War, and now the threat of destruction by communism.

> Destroying America is the communists' final and ultimate goal. They know America is God's final bulwark on earth. More than anything else, this is a test of whether America will stand as God's nation or fall.

As a doctor from outside, as a firefighter from outside, Moon declared that he had come from outside of America to rescue God's chosen nation from the danger of communism. For its salvation, Moon argued, 'America must return' to an 'absolutely God-centered ideology'. That return turned on America's acceptance of God's messiah, a recentering of America's civil religious symbols around the person of Sun Myung Moon. As a strategic recentering of American symbolic space, Moon and the Unification Church appropriated American civil religious symbols in order to establish a place in American society.[29]

Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple stood in dramatic contrast to the

Unification Church by undertaking a symbolic decentering of American civil space. In this regard, biblical symbols of sacred geography were important. The metaphoric transference of biblical patterns of oppressive space upon American soil served as a decentering strategy in which America registered as an alien, alienating space and through which the 'existential outsideness' of the Peoples Temple was reinforced. First, America appeared as a new Egypt holding a new chosen people in bondage and slavery. The Peoples Temple found itself in 'Pharaoh's Egypt, Pharaoh's Washington, Pharoah's America' (Q1057, part 4). As a new Israel, the Peoples Temple prepared for its exodus through the wilderness to a promised land. Second, America represented a new Babylonian captivity of a displaced people longing for their Jerusalem. Lamenting this exile, Jones exclaimed, 'We don't like Babylon, we don't like dictatorships' (Q958). He exhorted the Peoples Temple to remain unified so they could make their 'exodus through Babylon' (Q1057, part 4). After arriving in their New Jerusalem in the jungles of Guyana, Jones continued to rehearse the evils of America so that his community 'wouldn't look back to Babylon' (Q232). Finally, America was presented as the new oppressive power of Imperial Rome symbolised in the Book of Revelation; America was 'the antichrist system' (Q1053, part 4). The three spatial dyads of biblical sacred geography—Egypt/Promised Land, Babylon/Jerusalem, and Rome/New Heaven, New Earth—were appropriated to locate the Peoples Temple within the oppressive space of America. Revealing the malleability of biblical symbols of sacred geography, those dyads reinforced the alienation of the Peoples Temple in America. Significantly, the movement's final departure from America was called 'Operation Exodus'.[30]

Moon and Jones both insisted that they came from outside of American society—Moon from the east, Jones from outer space. In the 1970s, Moon appropriated civil and biblical symbols in a strategic effort to establish place in America. The Unification Church had very little success in achieving this objective. On the battlefield of sacred symbols, the New Religious Right was much more successful. As Walter Capps observed, 'the New Right … captured the prominent positive national symbols: nationalistic feeling, patriotism, the family, motherhood, virtue and moral rectitude'.[31] These were roughly the same symbols for which the Unification Church contended in America. We might conclude that, in order to establish place in America, a movement from the periphery must make convincing claims to ownership and use of a central complex of biblical and civil religious symbols. Rejecting the civil symbols, Jones appropriated biblical symbols to configure an alienation from American society and to motivate an escape from its oppressive domain. Rather than recentering his movement around civil symbols (or recentering those symbols around his movement), Jones erased, subverted and inverted biblical and civil religious symbols to decenter his movement in American symbolic space. Obviously, this was not a strategy that insured the survival of his movement.

In the academic study of religion, much has been made of the church–sect distinction; churches adapt to society, sects are in tension with society.[32] But a comparative analysis of the Unification Church and the Peoples Temple suggests (at the very least) that socio-religious tensions can assume different forms. A recentering of sacred symbols—adapting (and adapting to) dominant collective representations in a society—may involve just as much tension as the more radical strategy of decentering. In either case, tension may not be the result of a failure to adapt, but rather a function of competing claims to ownership in the cultural process of stealing back and forth sacred symbols. In the cult controversies of the 1970s, the term, 'religion', itself became a contested symbol over which various groups contended. This was only proper because religion, as I have suggested, is the arena of conflict over contending claims to the ownership of sacred symbols. I have adapted this definition of religion from a remark once made by Kenneth Burke to the effect that culture is the process of 'stealing back and forth of symbols'.[33] Religion may be that dimension of culture involving the stealing back and forth of sacred symbols. I adopt the word 'stealing' as a shorthand designation for complex negotiations over the ownership of symbols; but it does seem apt. It is easier to apropriate a symbol, than to steal a loaf of bread. The Unification Church and the Peoples Temple seemed to appropriate, operate and manipulate symbols with relative ease. What is difficult is to legitimate those appropriations. Here, interpretation enters to underwrite the legitimacy of acts of appropriation that are inevitably misappropriations, mistakings or misprisions.[34] In other words, interpretation disguises the act of 'stealing' that makes interpretation possible and necessary. But I am speaking about a particular kind of interpretation—sacred interpretation. That 'contestable notion of the sacred', as Rodney Needham once called it, still seems to me to be useful if it denotes the charged energy symbols carry when people claim them, own them, operate them and fight over them.[35] The sacrality of a symbol may be a function of the energy generated by claiming, owning, operating and fighting over it. Whitehead suggested that 'the object of symbolism is the enhancement of the importance of what is symbolized'.[36] A symbol is already important, however, to the extent that persons, communities, and traditions have an investment in it. Following Geertz, a religion may very well be a 'system of symbols . . .'; but it is always a system of symbols that someone owns.[37] I would like to direct academic attention away from a preoccupation with the meaning of symbolic systems, towards the power relations involved in the cultural process of the stealing back and forth of sacred symbols.

Different modes of engagement with religion as the cultural process of stealing back and forth sacred symbols seem possible. First, the *appropriation* *of symbols* is a mode of engagement that makes strategic claims to the ownership of symbols. In effect, it declares: 'You don't own them, we do'. As we have seen, the Unification Church, the Peoples Temple, the National Council of Churches, the anti-cult movement and others, all deployed this strategy on the battlefield of biblical and civil symbols in America. In negotiations over symbols, theology may be little more than an attempt to underwrite the legitimacy of contending claims to ownership. Second, the *alienation of symbols* is a mode of engagement that declares, in effect, 'You own them, we don't.' That alienation may be the result of a strategic rejection of symbols ('You own them, we don't want them') or an effective exclusion from access to and use of symbols ('You own them, we can't have them'). But in any event, the appropriation and alienation of symbols is a dialectic that operates in all negotiations over ownership. A price may be attached to the ownership of symbols. Unificationist appropriation of biblical symbols required the sacrificial payment of *indemnity* to restore the original pattern of creation (*DP*, 496). Jonestown alienation required a communal sacrifice, a 'revenge suicide' against the government, media and traitors who had violated the community. On that last night, Jones declared: 'They'll pay for it. They'll pay for it. This is revolutionary suicide'.[38] Jonestown's enemies could keep the symbols, but would have to pay the price. Part of that price, Jones hoped, would be a loss of the central complex of American civil religious symbols that had sustained capitalism and racism in America. 'We can shake their faith in [America] dramatically and tremendously,' Jones had insisted six years earlier in California, 'if we will be willing to go to the gallows for what we believe' (Q1057, part 3). The dialectic of appropriation and alienation appears to be inherently ambivalent; no amount of payment can insure ownership against competing acts of appropriation in the cultural process of stealing back and forth sacred symbols.

One last interpretive community needs to be located in this discussion: the academic study of religion.[39] A third mode of engagement with the cultural process of stealing back and forth sacred symbols opens in what might be called the *availability of symbols* which recognises that 'You don't own them, no one does'. While appropriation and alienation operate on the battlefield of symbols, religious studies opens up a demilitarised zone for the academic investigation of the underlying patterns and processes of religion. While religious persons, communities and traditions appropriate symbols, making exclusive, privileged claims to their ownership, the academic study of religion explores the morphological patterns and historical processes that make these acts of appropriation possible. The availability of symbols in religious studies is not some kind of theological universalism which claims that 'everyone owns them'; nor is it another appropriation of symbols making claims to ownership on behalf of an academic discipline. The morphology and history of the sacred

I would argue, deconstruct all claims to ownership, including any claims that might be made by the discipline of religious studies. A symbol might be 'owned', but not the underlying morphology of symbolic forms. A symbolic past might be 'owned'—a past constructed, as all pasts are, in the present to serve present interests—but not history. By exploring the morphology and history of the sacred, the academic study of religion reveals the ways in which religious persons, religious communities, and religious traditions themselves, are 'owned,' shaped and conditioned by the patterns and processes of the sacred. In this sense, religious studies is not religion: religion claims ownership of symbols; religious studies demonstrates that the morphology and history of sacred symbols cannot be owned. Not in the business of underwriting claims to ownership, religious studies can reveal those claims for what they are—strategic negotiations in the cultural process of the stealing back and forth of sacred symbols.

NOTES

1 Statement of the Unification Church on the Guyana Tragedy,' Document Files, Center for the Study of New Religious Movements, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California.

2 Ted Patrick (with Tom Dulack), *Let Our Children Go* (New York: Dutton, 1976), pp. 242, 238.

3 On the Peoples Temple, see David Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide: An Interpretation of Jim Jones, the Peoples Temple and Jonestown* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), where some of the themes that appear in this article are developed in greater detail. The best journalistic history of the movement is Tim Reiterman and John Jacobs, *Raven: The Untold Story of the Rev. Jim Jones and His People* (New York: Dutton, 1982). On the Unification Church, see David Bromley and Anson Shupe, Jr, *"Moonies" in America* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1979), and Eileen Barker, *The Making of a Moonie: Choice or Brainwashing?* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

4 David Bromley and Anson Shupe, Jr, 'The archetypal cult: Conflict and the social construction of deviance,' in Gene G. James (ed.) *The Family and the Unification Church* (New York: Rose of Sharon Press, 1983), pp. 1–22; Bromley and Shupe, 'The Moonies and the anti-cultists: Movements and countermovement in conflict,' in Jeffrey K. Hadden and Theodore E. Long (eds) *Religion and Religiosity in America* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), pp. 70–84; and Shupe and Bromley, *The New Vigilantes: Deprogrammers, Anti-Cultists and the New Religions* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1980). Legal aspects of the cult controversies are covered in William Shepherd *To Secure the Blessings of Liberty. American Constitutional Law and the New Religious Movements* (Chico, CA. Scholars Press, 1985), and Thomas Robbins, William Shepherd and James McBride (eds), *Cults, Culture, and the Law: Perspectives on New Religious Movements* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985).

5 *Washington Post*, 6 February, 1979; see Anson Shupe, Jr and David Bromley, 'Shaping the public response to Jonestown: Peoples Temple and the anticult movement,' in Ken Levi (ed.) *Violence and Religious Commitment: Implications of Jim Jones's Peoples Temple* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University

Press, 1982).

6 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966); I developed this angle on danger in 'Rituals of exclusion and the Jonestown dead', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (in press).

7 For example, Mircea Eliade, *Sacred and Profane*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), pp. 20–65; the best appreciation and critique remains Jonathan Z. Smith, 'The wobbling pivot', in *Map is Not Territory* (Leiden: Brill, 1978).

8 E. C. Relph, *Place and Placeness* (London: Pion, 1976), p. 55.

9 Nathan Hatch and Mark Noll (eds) *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

10 Frank K. Flinn (ed.) *Hermeneutics and Horizons: The Shape of the Future* (New York: Rose of Sharon Press, 1982), p. viii.

12 References to *Divine Principle* are from the second edition (Washington: Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1973); cited in the text as *DP*.

13 Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), pp. 1–26. On biblical typology in America, see Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origin of the American Self* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975).

14 References to sermons of Jim Jones are from tape recordings housed in the Federal Bureau of Investigation archives, J. Edgar Hoover Building, Washington, D.C.; cited in the text by FBI identification number.

15 See Thomas Virgil Peterson, *Ham and Japheth: The Mythic World of Whites in the Antebellum South* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1978).

16 Henry Wilder Foote, *Thomas Jefferson: Champion of Religious Freedom, Advocate of Christian Morals* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1947), p. 52. See Dickinson W. Adams (ed.) *Jefferson's Extracts from the Gospels: The "Philosophy of Jesus" and "The Life and Morals of Jesus"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

17 Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982).

18 For more detailed examination of the *Divine Principle* on these points, see Francis Clark, 'The Fall of Man in *Divine Principle*,' in Herbert Richardson (ed.) *Ten Theologians Respond to the Unification Church* (New York: Rose of Sharon Press, 1981), pp. 141–65.

19 This was obviously Jones's improvisation on Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875); Political Writings, 3 vols. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin/New Left, 1974), vol. III, p. 347.

20 There may be a Confucian character to this filial piety and harmony of spheres. See Andrew M. Wilson, 'Biblical hermeneutics in *Divine Principle*: The context of Confucianism,' in Flinn (ed.) *Hermeneutics and Horizons*, pp. 3–24.

21 See Robert Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955); Robert Griffith, *The Politics of Fear* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1970); and David M. Oshinsky, 'The Red Bogey in America, 1917–1950,' in *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy* (New York: Free Press, 1983), pp. 85–102; Elements of worldview formation can be recalled: the classification of persons resulted in statements like that of Harold Velde, Chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1953, that Communists 'are foreign to our nation and to our God. In the world of humanity they are aliens.' Richard Fried, *Men Against McCarthy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), p. 213. Orientation in time and space was

constructed as an apocalyptic scenario so that even an anti-McCarthy senator such as Ralph Flanders in 1953 could declare: 'In very truth, the world seems to be mobilizing for the great battle of Armageddon. Now is a crisis in the agelong warfare between God and the Devil for the souls of men.' Ralph E. Flanders, *Senator from Vermont* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1961), p. 255. G. David Schine, who was an important ingredient in the demise of Joseph McCarthy, authored a six-page pamphlet distributed by all the Schine hotels which suggested my point that worldviews are formed in the cultural process of stealing back and forth sacred symbols. Schine accused Communists of 'stealing words, such as freedom, security, and equality from the Bible, and other good covenants to confuse issues, and deceive the mind into ensnarement.' James Roty and Moshe Decter, *McCarthy and the Communists* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954), p. 154–156. The cult controversies of the 1970s, it might be argued, were in an important sense transpositions of the red scare. For example, one anti-cultist made the revealing observation that 'an uncomfortable reality has at last come home to the American public: brainwashing, which seemed exclusively a communist technique, is alive in America and used by cults.' P. A. Verdier, *Brainwashing and the Cults* (Hollywood, CA: Institute of Behavioral Conditioning, 1977), p. 11.

22 *Time*, 21 March, 1983, p. 40.

23 Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, 1928–1978* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981).

24 Sun Myung Moon, 'God's Hope for America: Keynote Speech at Yankee Stadium June 1, 1976,' in Irving Louis Horowitz (ed.) *Science, Sin, and Scholarship: The Politics of Reverend Moon and the Unification Church* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978), pp. 2–11.

25 Cited in the Reply Brief for Appellant Sun Myung Moon and the *Amicus Curiae* of the National Council of Churches and the American Civil Liberties Union.

26 Robert Redfield, *The Papers of Robert Redfield, Vol. 1: Human Nature and the Study of Society; Vol. 2: The Social Uses of the Social Sciences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963): vol. I, pp. 270–273; vol. II, p. 163. I made a preliminary attempt at developing this definition in 'Being human: Symbolic orientation in new religious movements,' *Journal of Dharma*, vol. 7 (1982), pp. 430–451, and in *Patterns of Action: Religion and Ethics in a Comparative Perspective* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1987), pp. 199–224.

27 See Jonathan Z. Smith, 'Adde Parvum Parvo Magnus Acervus Erit,' in *Map is Not Territory*, pp. 240–264.

28 Mircea Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978): vol. I p. 3.

29 Thomas Robbins, Dick Anthony, Madeline Doucas, and Thomas Curtis, 'The last civil religion: Reverend Moon and the Unification Church,' *Sociological Analysis*, vol. 37 (1976), pp. 111–125; Robert Bellah, 'Civil Religion in America', in *Beyond Belief* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 168–192.

30 On the malleability of this biblical symbol, see Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

31 Walter Capps, *The Unfinished War: Vietnam and the American Conscience* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982), p. 134. Other examples of the appropriation of civil religious symbols by peripheral movements are discussed in my *Patterns of Power: Religion and Politics in American Culture* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1988).

32 Benton Johnson, 'On Church and Sect', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 28

(1963), p. 542; Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 19–37.

33 Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), p. 328. During my time of 'academic exile', I have explored this redefinition of religion in other contexts: 'Religious studies as political practice in South Africa', *Journal of Theology in Southern Africa*, vol. 58 (1987), p. 4–17; and 'Religion alive/religious studies unborn: A theoretical review of recent research on African indigenous churches', *Journal of Religious Studies* (in press).

34 This last term is from Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

35 Rodney Needham, 'Characteristics of Religion,' in *Circumstantial Deliveries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 89.

36 Alfred North Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), p. 63.

37 Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in Michael Banton (ed.) *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion* (London: Tavistock, 1966): 4.

38 Transcript of that last night was published in the *New York Times*, 15 March 1979. Tape recording remains classified by the FBI. See Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 126–134. On 'revenge suicide,' see M. D. W. Jeffreys, 'Samsonic suicides: Or suicides of revenge among Africans,' in Anthony Giddens (ed.) *The Sociology of Suicide* (London: Frank Cass, 1971), pp. 185–194.

39 My conclusion is a small contribution to the recent debate on the place of theology in religious studies (Ivan Strenski, 'Our very own "Contras": A response to the "St. Louis Project" Report,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 54 (1986), pp. 323–335; Donald Wiebe, 'The failure of nerve in the academic study of religion,' *Studies in Religion*, vol. 13 (1984), pp. 401–422; and 'The prelogical mentality revisited', *Religion*, vol. 17 (1987), pp. 29–61). While theology may (or may not) involve different interpretive approaches, and it may (or may not) involve different epistemological grounds, the crucial issue it seems to me is one of power. Theology is implicated in the cultural process of stealing back and forth sacred symbols because it underwrites the legitimacy, authenticity or validity of acts of appropriation. Therefore, theology is an important ingredient *in* the power struggles that the academic study of religion studies; but it cannot be a method in that study without violating the renunciation of ownership upon which religious studies as an academic discipline is based.

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SURVEY ARTICLE:

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO ISLAMIC BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIALS

Marcia K. Hermansen

INTRODUCTION

The following review considers major scholarly approaches relevant to a history of religions perspective which have been used in examining Islamic biographical materials. As part of this overview, issues which these studies have brought to the fore and desiderata for future research will be indicated.

In order to systematize and establish connections among some of these approaches, a series of five topics will serve to introduce various theoretical orientations. There is, naturally, a considerable amount of overlap among these categories, as there is among the topical categories of the accompanying bibliography. The topics covered are as follows.

1. The nature of Islamic 'biographical' materials, i.e. genre, characteristics and function of various types of biographical writings.
2. Indigenous concepts and terminology relevant to biographical writing. This is the need to clarify, define and analyze key terms used in writings describing persons, their experiences and relationships.
3. Role/life-telling/concept of person. This topic encompasses a variety of approaches—literary, anthropological and psychological— to biographical writings which view life accounts as positing examplars or fulfilling embodiments of cultural or religious paradigms. Isolating, describing and analyzing this process is a central aim of approaches within this topic.
4. Literary critical methods for discovering principles of selectivity and underlying structuring assumptions. This approach includes formal and semiotic approaches to understanding formally coded information, to the comparison of texts, or to other types of content or formal analysis. The tension and cross-fertilization of historical and literary approaches to biographical writing will also be considered here.

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5. Hagiography/sacred biography. This includes studies of the images of major figures in the religious traditions; emcompassing the development, transformation, and role of such figures as foci of piety and stimuli to action. The problem of moving beyond descriptive approaches to sacred biography so as to incorporate explanatory and analytical perspectives will be discussed here.

TYPE AND GENRE

A basic question asks which materials are biographical in Islamic contexts. This has been taken up by Anne Lambton (1962), and Marilyn Waldman (in prep.) who notes that biographical information may be found not only in specifically biographical works but also in local histories, geographical dictionaries, chronicles, letters, 'mirrors for princes' literature, didactic and exemplary (adab) writings, poetry, and travel literature. Waldman therefore observes that in comparison to Western civilization, there is a wider range and dispersal of biographical information in Islamic writings. It is important for researchers to recognize this in discussing the biographical dimension of Islamic literature. Another relevant feature is noted in H. A. R. Gibb's statement that 'the biographical dictionary is a wholly idigenous creation of the Islamic community' (Gibb, 1968, p. 54). Reflecting on the inclusion of very ordinary persons in the biographical dictionaries (tabaqāt), Gibb further observes that

> the history of the Islamic community is essentially the contribution of individual men and women to the building up and transmission of its specific culture. That is, it is these persons (rather than the political governors) who represent or reflect the active force of Muslim society. [Gibb, 1968.]

Coupled with the wide dispersal of biographical information in Islamic writings, there exist a significant number of what might be termed specifically biographical 'genres'. By designating these as genres, I wish to draw attention to the issue of what constitutes genre as a form which may be chosen, consciously or unconsciously, in order to convey information within a particular mode. The major Islamic biographical genres are as follows.

Sīra, pl. siyar

Usually sīra refers to the biography of Prophet Muhammed. The term 'sīra' conveys the idea of manner of conduct, or behavior (Della Vida, EI[1] 'sīra'). The lives of saints may also be dealt with under the term 'siyar', although in this case they are often structured in notice form corresponding to the presentation of saintly biographies in the memorial (tadhkira) works.

Tabaqāt

This is the form usually referred to as the 'biographical dictionary'. Th designation tabaqāt refers to the arrangement of notices in these often voluminous works, according to some system of ordering into ranks or classes (tabaqat). The earliest extant example is the *Kitāb al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr* of Ibn Saᶜd (d. 845) which contains some 4250 biographical notices of men and women of the first Islamic generations. (W. Fueck, EI^2 'Ibn Saᶜd'). An individual notice in Ibn Saᶜd may range from a brief mention of two lines to quite a number of pages. The general pattern of a notice would be: genealogy, marriage(s), children, acceptance of Islam, taking allegiance (bayᶜa), various reports about the person in hadith form (i.e. with a chain of transmitters narrating a specific event, comment or saying of the person), their death, funeral, who prayed at their graveside, and so on.

In regard to life reporting in the tabaqāt, Marilyn Waldman's observation that the concept of what a life is varies from one civilization to another is apposite here (Waldman, in prep.). Recent Western concepts of what a life is tend to be diachronic, linear, stretching from birth to death, and told so as to reveal character development. In contrast, the typical life in Ibn Saᶜd's *Tabaqāt* begins far back in genealogical determinants and may stretch into a point in the afterlife through establishing a rank in or promise of paradise.

From the earlier material up to the present time, the telling of lives in much Islamic biographical material does not present a series of events or cumulative reflections as contributing to character development. Rather, biographical notices serve to establish origins and display a person's type or example through presenting his or her discrete actions and sayings. For interesting data which presents this pattern of origin (asl) disclosed over time in lived experience, based on contemporary anthropological observations of Moroccan understandings of personhood and character, see Geertz (1979) and Rosen (1985).

An extensive review article on the 'Tabaqāt' genre is Ibrahim Hafsi's 'Recherches sur le genre 'Tabaqāt' dans la littérature arabe' (Hafsi, 1976, 1977). Hafsi lists and classifies the major tabaqāt according to types of persons included (i.e. hadith transmitters, mystics or poets) and century of composition. Hafsi then formulates his own classificiation of tabaqāt compilers as initiators, innovators or imitators. Under principles of ranking or classifying, Hafsi cites some basic examples of schemata for arranging Sunni tabaqāt, such as the ordering of Companions of the Prophet, Followers, Successors to the Followers and later generations. This is, of course, a common way of thinking of merit and authority in early Islam. Parallel Shiᶜa ranking systems are also cited including: Companions of the Prophet, Companions of ᶜAlī, then Hasan, and Husain; or alternatively the Pure Ones (asfiyā'), Saints (Auliya), Ones Promised Paradise by ᶜAlī, and his Companions.

Tadhkira

Tadhkira means a memorial. Tadhkira collections of the lives of poets, mystics, or scholars are common in later periods, especially in Iran and South Asia. Tadhkirāt are similar to Tabaqāt in presenting lives through anecdotes and may offer further narrative biographical material on the subject of the notice. However, they do not necessarily incorporate ranking systems, although in the Persianate context, generational, alphabetical or other factors of ordering by affinity or family relationships may be used. A possible approach to some of the tadhkira material would be content analysis and determination of prominent topoi of these anecdotes, along the lines of Carl Ernst's (1985) analysis of Sufi ecstatic sayings as clustered around major themes such as the paradox of faith and infidelity. An example from ᶜAttar's famous *Tadhkirāt al-Auliyā* are the many anecdotes in Rabīᶜa of Basra's life which pit her charisma as a true 'saint' against that of Hasan of Basra who appears as a formalist foil. Further consideration of this, and exploration of other Sufi biographies or other versions of Rabīᶜa's biography in separate collections, could reveal aspects of ᶜAttar's principle of selectivity and how Rabīᶜa's authenticity was viewed.

Malfūzāt

Malfūzāt, which are records of audiences and the question and answer sessions of notable scholars or Sufis, is a genre indigenous to South Asian Islam. The early Indian Sufis are well known from records preserved in this form. For a bibliography of early malfūzāt and related literature, see Bruce Lawrence (1978). Issues raised in the scholarly study of early malfūzāt collections include the authenticity of these works and selectivity on the part of the compiler. Malfūzāt as a biographical genre often provides a more spontaneous, authentic flavor of the person in contrast to the more idealized portrayals of the tadhkirāt. While their topoi are less obvious, the malfūzāt are a valuable source for historical surroundings, information about teachings and attitudes—if not of the purported originator—at least of a subsequent but still early period. These sessions may be presented chronologically and dated rather like a diary.

Manāqib

Manāqib is a genre recording the merits and miraculous doings of sacred persons. The emphasis on the miraculous as a source of authority raises issues deserving historical and sociological consideration. A possible inspiration for scholars of Islamic tradition might be the careful scholarship of Peter Brown (1981) and Patricia Cox (1983) on the depictions of Christian learned and holy persons in late antiquity, which raise issues of the social and doctrinal context shaping the presentation of 'saintly' lives. From another perspective, the types of miracles attributed to individual saints also merit further consideration. Saints may be opposed in these narratives to non-Muslim detractors, other saints or doubting Muslims. How do aspects of the miracles reflect specifically Islamic symbols of the sacred? The distinction between karāmāt (ways in which the saint confirms his high rank) and barakāt (blessings emanating from the saint) indicate refinements in the conception of saintly charisma. Notions of saintly hierarchy, territory and patronage elaborated in these texts can be studied and located in a socio-historical context.

Autobiographies

Early Muslim biographies in Arabic were most thoroughly studied by Rosenthal (1937) who proposed that a Greek model had been transmitted through Hunain ibn Ishāq (d. 877). In the medieval period, autobiographies were sometimes prefaced to a scholar's works and read like a curriculum vitae, including the individual's teachers, places visited, and works studied, transmitted or composed. The isnāds or chains of transmission established through this or related material such as ijāzas (certificates that the holder had a teacher's permission to give instruction about a specific work or a general body of knowledge) have proved valuable sources in tracing scholarly networks for the transmission of ideas (Gran, 1979; Voll, 1982). Kingly autobiographies and biographies flourished in Mughul India. The *Baburname*, a chronicle of the life of the emperor Babur, dictated by the ruler himself, was recently studied at a special conference.[1] More recently, Western literature has influenced autobiographical writing in Islamic societies, although the choice and presentation of material needs to be examined in order to assess how the two traditions are combined (ᶜAbd al-Ghānī, 1969; Shuisski, 1982).

Related genres

Examples of works related to biography are hadith collections, genealogical works and fadā'il (virtues) and khasā'is (special attributes) literature (listing merits or preference for certain persons, places or things). Particularly important is the relationship of early biography and hadith. The ᶜilm al-rijāl, or 'science of the men', was a branch of Islamic historiography verifying the reliability (taᶜdīl) of hadith transmitters according to criteria such as their connection to the Prophet or each another, and their virtues and activities as individuals. In Shiᶜa writings this is also elaborated as proof of piety and authority.[2]

The fadā'il of important persons constitutes a sub-section of most hadith collections and reveals early concepts of charisma, character or authority. Khasā'is or literature listing the special merits of Prophets or Companions is a related genre. For example, ᶜA'isha's fada'īl among the wives of the Prophet are listed by Ibn Saᶜd as her being the only virgin he married, she and he washing from one basin, his receiving revelation in her presence, his praying while she stood in front of him, his passing away while in her house on the night he regularly spent in her company, and his being buried in her house. The circumstances and qualities of her relationship to the Prophet Muhammad therefore display her preferred status, rather than constituting a commentary on her intrinsic virtues or character. This pattern of virtue, through relationship and contiguity as found in other biographies and statements of virtue and authority in Islamic civilization, merits further examination.

A further division of hadith compendia which blossomed into a genre of biographical literature is the Kutub al-zuhd (Books on Asceticism). These provide insights into the early development of Sufism and how ascetic behaviors functioned as an index of merit and authority.

INDIGENOUS TERMINOLOGY AND CONCEPTS

Under this heading the isolation and definition of key terms and concepts used in Islamic biographical writings, as well as the problem of using words associated with concepts in the Christian tradition, will be considered.

Certain terms, due to the fact that they may be frequently used, defined or discussed in Islamic sources, merit particular consideration; for example, bayᶜa—to take allegiance; fadā'il—merits, reasons for being preferred; sahāba—being a companion of the Prophet; and nisba—relationship, affiliation.[3]

The way in which these terms are used in describing persons and their relationships needs to be more closely examined. A starting point would be collecting and comparing indigenous descriptions or definitions of what appear to be key terms. Technical legal reasons for specifying such relationships should also be considered; for example, the definitions of the status of companionship (sahāba) found in reliability (jarh and taᶜdīl) works. Discussions and definitions of certain terms in the Islamic sources may reflect a shift in meaning or a need to make a term more precise for the purpose of establishing legal authority. The re-emergence or initiation of a discussion of terminology in later periods likely reflect broader changes in the social environment.

An example would be ongoing discussions of the ramifications of nisba (relationship) used among Sufis with the connotation of affiliation to a particular order. Seventeenth and eighteenth century thinkers in India such as Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī and Shāh Walī Allāh felt it important to define whether multiple Sufi tarīqa affiliations (nisba) were harmful to the spiritual training of a disciple. The fact that this discussion took place reveals both a process of reconsidering the implications of the term nisba, and changing societal circumstances or differences in self-perception among Sufis which brought this issue to the forefront. One possible impetus for such a discussion may have been the disintegration of central, unified political authority. Thus, political fragmentation with the emergence of multiple sources of temporal authority was mirrored by the Sufis in their conceptualization of spiritual power networks.

While it has sometimes been natural to use terminology associated implicity or explicitly with Christianity when discussing Islamic phenomena in English, caution should be used so as to not lose sight of the real differences in the conceptual and institutional meanings of these terms. Prominent examples are 'sainthood' and 'conversion'. The comparison of Muslim and Christian 'sainthood' by Bryan S. Turner (1974) has sensitized a number of social scientists to this issue, although some scholars of religion continue to overlook it.[4] Similarly the contrast of khass (elite, special) and ᶜām (common, public) in various sorts of texts needs to be evaluated in the terms of the culture and type of text, i.e. the political elite 'khass' and mystical 'khass' are clearly not the same set of persons, although they may overlap.

Although the precise connotations of saintship may vary greatly at societal and institutional levels, it remains desirable for scholars of Islamic mysticism to consider work done on learned and holy persons in other traditions. For example, Peter Brown's *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* challenges the assumption that the rise of the cult of the saints represented a resurgence of lower-class superstition. Hagiographic, theological and historical sources prove that it was rather largely an urban and aristocratic movement. Similar questions need to be asked of Islamic material in order to clarify the emergence and institutional development of Sufism, combining Turner's sociological and Brown's more humanities-based approaches.

Conversion is another important concept illuminated by the study of Islamic biographical literature. There is no real Islamic term equivalent to 'conversion' to indicate a radical change which reorients one's life vision. In Ibn Saᶜd's *Tabaqāt*, for example, 'bayᶜa', or taking allegiance to the Prophet and his community, stands as an accompaniment to 'aslama'—submission to Allah. This is especially noteworthy when considered in the light of the Qur'ānic verse: 'When they take allegiance to the Prophet, the hand of God is over their hands' (48:10) In other words, the role of relationship to the Prophet and his community plays a great role in the sense of what adherence to Islam means. Wilfred Cantwell Smith's (1981) seminal discussion of 'Islam' as an ongoing process of commitment is a valuable existential supplement to the understanding of this process.[5]

It may be observed that the biographical notices in Ibn Saᶜd are not told so as to suggest or portray any radical acts of inner change of heart which occasion a break with previous ties of affiliation or origin. Rather, retaining tribal and family allegiances through the prominence of genealogy as an identifying and organizing feature, suggests the maintenance of previous elements of personhood while adjusting within a new and largely compatible set of relationships as a Muslim.

In general, this earliest extant biographical dictionary stresses 'inclusiveness' within the Islamic community, rather than the distinction us/them, or before/after. A similar observation may be made concerning al-Waqidī's *Maghāzī* work on the heroic campaigns of the Prophet Muhammad. This early prophetic biographical material portrays the Prophet as a hero in the mould of the champions of the 'Ayyām al-ᶜArab', the glorious aspects of pre-Islamic days, and thus is continuous with previous traditions.

At the same time one cannot ignore those genres of biography, in particular autobiography and hagiography, which do describe a change of inner state or outlook. For example, Sufi 'tauba' (repentance) experiences, the most well-known example being al-Ghazzālī's *Deliverance from Error*. According to a suggestion by H. Lazarus-Yaffe (1975), the form of this classic may have been influenced by biographies in the same tradition of Ismaᶜīlī esotericism that Ghazzālī condemns in his work.[6] Regarding the question of whether these repentance experiences constitute conversions, Ira M. Lapidus, in an article on 'Adulthood in Islam: religious maturity in the Islamic tradition' (1976), uses the biographical data on al-Ghazzālī and Ibn Khaldūn to suggest that while Islam is not preoccupied with mapping life stages and transitions between them to the same extent as, say, Hinduism, still there are concepts of maturity in Islam additional to the formal legal definitions. The biographies examined by Lapidus both feature the person's experience as an adult of a return to, or deepening of, true faith. This is consonant with the formulation of the well-known hadith that every child is born with an original nature (fitra) to which a return is possible and desirable. Later commentators identified the fitra specifically with the Islamic religion, although a more existential interpretation is also possible. While Sufi literature is a rich source for ethno-psychological theory and discussions of inner states, up to this point there has been little attempt to match the ideal or exemplary theory—for example, of stages and states—with biographical data. Another article by Lapidus (1984) does match the Sufi theory of stages (maqāmāt) with what might be termed a model of transformation during the life process from conflict (as in fear and repentance) to gnosis (as in disclosure and contentment).

Much Sufi autobiographical material consists of visions and dreams rather than external events. These futūhāt (openings, epiphanies) or fuyūḍ (emanations), for example those of al-Tirmidhī (d. 932), Ibn al-ᶜArabi (d. 1240) and Shāh Walī Allāh (d. 1762), deserve further study. Here the Sufis' own exegesis of a symbol or vision and its relationship to major symbols within the Islamic tradition would be most instructive. Literary analysis could disclose how the discrete flashes of Sufi vision are related to the symbols of sustained visionary recitals such as those of Suhrawardī and Ibn Sīnā studied by Henry Corbin.[7] In summary, the fact that there may be no equivalent of a radical, rebirth type of conversion experience in the Islamic tradition is understandable given its root metaphors of return and inclusiveness. This demonstrates that terminological nuances and precision should be borne in mind while interpreting biographical materials.

ROLE DEPICTION, LIFE-TELLING AND THE CONCEPT OF PERSON

The concept of role mediates between the individual and society, psychology and sociology. For the historian of religion, an important issue related to role-development and perpetuation is to what extent ideal concepts such as those presented in a founder's biography shape subsequent life-tellings. Donald Capps and Frank Reynolds in *The Biographical Process* (1972) take up this problem of how the structure and details of the founder's life serve to set an example to be embodied in the life-tellings and even life choices of subsequent participants in that tradition. This approach has been followed by Earle H. Waugh in two articles (1972, 1986) where he considers not only the depiction of Prophet Muhammad in Sufī and popular piety, but also the function of 'models' in religious literature. Scholars of the Islamic religious tradition will find in biographical materials a means to mediate the tension between the norm and its exemplification in the personal and historical dimensions of individual lives; but even that norm is constantly reinterpreted throughout history as work on sacred biography indicates.

This concept of a biographical process of exemplification/embodiment is particularly germane to Islamic biobraphical materials which are shaped by an explicit set of genres and types. For example, the genre of giving advice to the ideal ruler known as 'mirrors for princes' literature, will undoubtedly influence the composition of kingly biography or autobiography. The historian reading such material in search of fact and the perceptions of the author/compiler must therefore be conscious of conformity and dissonance with the anticipated type or example. The influence of didactic purpose and moral attitude on presentation of material is discussed by Marilyn Waldham in *A Theory of Historical Narrative* (1980), her study of the *Tarīkh-i-Baihaqī*, an 11th century work. She quotes Marshall Hodgson's apposite observation that in Islamic historical writing 'accuracy as to "fact" was much less important than validity to life vision' (Hodgson, 1968).

In the context of Islamic materials, the correspondence of life and role-depiction to an ideal type or set of criteria is a prominent feature of Qur'ānic narrative. This has been studied, again by Waldman (1986) in her paper considering the Joseph story of the Qur'ān (Sura 12). Waldman employs techniques of literary and narrative criticism to demonstrate the distinctive features of Qur'ānic narrative style in which the events of Joseph's experience may be seen as individual details which yet embody the ideal prophetic type. Another article employs a narrative and structural approach to analyze the portrayal of Adam in a series of Qur'ānic passages (Hermansen, 1988). Here, his unfolding story not only embodies features of a prophetic model similar to those isolated by Waldman, but also serves to exemplify a course of human experiences taken up by the Islamic tradition as an ideal model, later interpreted with various nuances by disparate groups such as the theologians, moral philosophers and mystics. This general Islamic concept of person may be summarized as portraying human development as the following of a course of overcoming the inherent conflicts and contradictions of human nature and life in this world, in order to proceed towards a state of balance and contentment—and for Sufis and philosophers, gnosis and disclosure. The legal and theological disciplines locate this resolution in the afterlife—hence its symbolization as a realm where the threats of sexuality or intoxication are neutralized or 'cooled off'.[8] Sufis and philosophers take a more teleological ethical view and seek for resolution in the present existence. These models have recently been studied in its several dimensions (Metcalf, 1984), most specifically in articles by Richard Kurin and Ira Lapidus, both of whom use classical textual concepts to illuminate individual biographical narratives.

Returning to our sub-topic of role depiction, it is important to note that the same individual will be portrayed variously in different role contexts: for example, the same person functioning as both a poet and a scholar, or in another example, ᶜĀ'isha as young and playful wife of the Prophet, or as a 'faqīh' or expert in judging issues of legal import.

The synthesis of mystical and scholarly types embodied in the role of the ulema of the Deoband seminary in India in the late 1800s has been masterfully presented by Metcalf (1982). In this study, she draws on the rich biographical sources which fortunately exist for many such religious figures in the tradition of South Asian Islam.

Scholars of other traditions may take note of an interesting theoretical study of the influence of role-depiction in biographical writing during late antiquity, which has been carried out by Patricia Cox (1983). She explains the reasons for increasingly sanctifying philosophers' lives in the telling by incorporating ascetic and miraculous elements due to the pressure on the pagan composers of these works from the emerging Christian tradition. This propagandistic use of biography to augment authoritativeness or crystallize devotion may fruitfully be studied in Islamic contexts; for example, in the asceticism (Zuhd) and reliability (jarh wa ta^{c}dīl) of hadith transmitters literature. Recent work by Th. Emil Homerin, on the 13th century Sufi Ibn al-Fārid of Egypt, documents just this sort of reshaping of the poet's life into that of a Sufi saint who gradually becomes an object of veneration and hagiography.[9]

Richard Eaton's study of the *Sufis of Bijapur* creatively uses biographical information in tadkira and malfūzāt form to determine a set of roles fulfilled by Sufis in the medieval Deccan (1300–1700). Types adduced by Eaton include warriors, and literary, reformist and landed elite Sufis. Eaton reflects at some length on the problems of using tadhkira material compiled in later centuries, on the basis of oral tradition, to discover a historically accurate individual life. He suggests checking as many historical references as possible in order to determine whether there is a kernel of truth to the life account, and he also puts more trust in accounts not subordinated to perpetuating a 'saint cult' (Eaton, 1978, pp. 19–21).

While the formalistic patterns of much of the material present some problems for the historian, an approach similar to that of Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell in *Saints and Society* can be used. This approach employs statistical analysis to quantify aspects of saintly attributes and activity, and it can be used to tell us more about religious expression and social factors with respect to the lives of Islamic learned and 'holy' persons within a social/family context.

Many anthropological or psycho-biographical approaches shed light on issues of role-depiction and life-telling. A fundamental assumption of much anthropological literature on life accounts is that these accounts are shaped by existing assumptions or 'cultural models'. For a discussion of this, one may refer to Capps and Reynolds (1976) or Langness and Frank (1981).

In scholarship on the Islamic tradition we have the well-known example of Clifford Geertz's *Islam Observed* (1968), where the 'classical styles' of Indonesian and Moroccan Islam are elucidated by the biographical models of the prominent religious figures Sunan Kaligjaga (16th century Indonesia) and Sidi Lahsen Lyusi (17th century Morocoo).

In an article entitled 'Religious paradigms and political action' (1976), Victor Turner explores, in the case of Thomas Becket, how the pre-existing model (of martyrdom) shapes not only how a life may be told but how it may be acted out.[10] The possible relevance of this to studies in Islamic sacred biography is clear, and a related anthropological approach to the symbolism of Husain as mediating conflict in an Iranian context has been taken by Gustav Thaiss (1975).

Related to the study of role types and biography in culture are observations of roles in transition. A second book on South Asian moral values under pressure from modernization, edited by K. P. Ewing (1988) will consider this question from various aspects.

Studies taking a psycho-analytical perspective on biographical materials are, as yet, rare in Islamic contexts. Crapanzano offers a detailed study of a somewhat deviant Moroccan in *Tuhami* (1980), and Ewing has considered aspects of Pakistani life experiences in her studies based on extensive field work in Lahore.[11] While not specifically biographical, James Peacock's work on Indonesia and Malaysia, *Muslim Puritans*, is suggestive regarding the influence of cultural patterns of child-rearing on producing adults responsive to specific ideological trends. Although studies of early leaders may generalize about the psychology of their religious experience, it is usually admitted that biographical details available for pre-modern figures do not allow detailed psychoanalytic methods of analysis to be applied. For the modern period, political leaders such as Muhammed Ali Jinnah and Kemal Ataturk have provoked psychobiographical interest. The biographical and autobiographical texts produced in contemporary Muslim societies need to be studied in order to understand the process of how life-telling and self-concepts shift in response to cultural change and exposure to Western genres and life concepts. This response presumably affects all levels, from self-statement to sacred biography, as in the case of ᶜAlī Shariᶜatī's stressing the existential meaning of Fātima's life, extrapolated from rather scanty traditional sources. Studies of heroic or exemplary aspects of female lives as presented by contemporary biographers should prove particularly interesting.

LITERARY METHODS

This topic had until recently been tackled mainly, and often indirectly, by historians needing to evaluate the accuracy and significance of material presented. The formalistic nature of Islamic historian and biographical materials invites a literary analysis of those conventional assumptions underlying the selection and presentation of information. Several scholars have pointed out the implicit tension between historical and literary approaches to biographical materials.

Marilyn Waldman observes that the very designation 'biographical dictionary' is prejudicial to content and analysis since it implies that such works are quantitive summaries for reference purpose—along the lines of *Who's Who*. She therefore proposes the alternative term 'biographical compendia' (Waldman, in prep.).

Imaginative use of quantitative methods has been made by Richard Bulliet (1972, 1979) who analyzes demographic data, such as names revealing origin or non-Muslim ancestry, so as to trace the movements of scholars and the frequency curve of conversions in early Iran. This then allows further interpretation of some early disputes at the level of doctrines supported by different social classes.

The literary alternative in approaching biographical material has been addressed by Fedwa Malti-Douglas (1980) and Hartmut Fähndrich (1983). Malti-Douglas suggests that reading biographical material as if it presents pure information overlooks the semiotic system coding information at more subtle levels. Thus, her analysis of how dreams recounted in individual biographies authenticate information opens up a new possibility of apprehending the author's intent. Fähndrich proposes a literary approach in the context of a review of historiographical assumptions regarding biographical materials. Contrasting 'illustration' in this material to 'information', he suggests a closer look at anecdote and topic in order to reveal the subtle repertoire of choice and intent. This is consistent with Hodgson's point, cited above (p. 171) on factual accuracy. Waldman's work on *Tarīkh-i-Baihaqī* (1980) also addresses the intersection of literary and historical approaches to narration, proposing that recognizing the formal conventions allows the scholar to note when these have meaningfully been shifted or flaunted.

The use of literary methods promises especially fruitful ground for future research in biographical materials. The increasing attention given to narrative theory and semiotic approaches to texts in religious and other literature now needs to be focussed on Islamic sources. The distinctive nature of these sources offers the possibility of a corrective to ethno-centric biases and a deepening of our appreciation of the function of genre in shaping the transmission of tradition, whether by explicit and implicit intent. Concepts such as 'spatiality' or 'configurational apprehension' as discussed in Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* (1984) may illuminate or be challenged by studies focussing on the structure of Islamic narrative. The influence of Qur'ānic and hadith narrative as types and the aural/oral quality of narrative in Islamic civilization are now receiving more scholarly attention and this trend will open up new understandings of biographical writings.

SACRED BIOGRAPHY

Sacred biography is most clearly the purview of a history of religions approach to life-tellings. Biographies of the Prophet Muhammad, other Qur'ānic figures, his Companions, his daughter Fātima, certain Sufi saints, and in Shi^{c}a tradition the Imams, have all functioned to focus Islamic devotion and piety. While consideration of biographies of the Prophet remain beyond the scope of this paper, two works on the richness and variety in scope of the Prophet's role should be mentioned, those of Tor Andrae (1918) and the recent work of Annemarie Schimmel (1985). Recent biographies by Muslims, such as Haykal's and even Western scholarly biographies, all add to this body of literature. Other Prophets, such as Abraham and Joseph, have received recent scholarly attention and their exemplary and paradigmatic role within Islam has now become the focus, rather than the issue of historical borrowings or influence, indicating that a more productive turn has been taken. Other Qur'ānic figures such as Khidr and even Iblīs have been studied as providing examples or embodying metaphysical truths (Awn, 1982).[12] Literary, folk-tale, and heroic narrative interweave with personal life-telling at various points, and a vast body of devotional biography awaits systematic study.

The images of many Islamic figures in the subsequent tradition deserve further study, but the function of the Husain cycle has been considered by Gustave Thaiss and M. Ayoub (1982). ᶜAlī Shariᶜatī's reworking of Alī's, Husain's, Fātima's and Abū Dharr's biographies, in order to inspire the Shiᶜa youth of recent Iran, is noteworthy. His work *Fatima is Fatima* exists in English translation (Laleh Bakhtiar, 1982) and its attempt to transform the existential implications of traditional data into a didactic and inspiring role-model has been noted by Hermansen (1983). Observations on 'legendary' elements of Ayatollah Khomeini's biography, which resonate with powerful and emotional motifs in the Shiᶜa tradition, have been made by Michael M. J. Fischer (1980, 1983).[13] Sacred biography in the Shiᶜa tradition needs to be considered in comparative perspective. Does the focus on Imāmology bring life history into a more kerygmatic focus? Is the ethical message of a life more fluently articulated in this tradition? In the Ismaᶜili tradition, do ginān and conversion literature present biographical narrative in distinctive ways?[14]

Female sacred biography is a topic in its own right. An article by Jane MacAuliffe (1982) compares some aspects of Mary's role (in both Christian and Muslim sources) and Fātima's sacred biography. Further research could consider how sacredness is revealed in female life accounts.

While descriptive or phenomenological surveys of some aspects of Islamic sacred biographical writing exist, there still remains a need for a more analytic approach to show how biographical images are appropriated and transformed.[15] New methodologies of textual analysis offer a possible solution to the limitations of the descriptive cataloguing of biographical roles and images: for example, the relationship of shifts in genre to shifts in the focus or understanding of an image, or the influence of the medium of presentation—whether the mawlid ceremony, tazieh or rawzeh,[16] or a philosophical treatise. Studies of the use of allusion or image as opposed to narration, or of other literary techniques can add interpretive depth to the analysis and may in turn be correlated with developments external to the world of the text alone. In this way, future biographical studies may help to integrate interpretive and explanatory methodologies in studies of the Islamic tradition from the perspective of history of religions.

NOTES

1 Unpublished papers were presented at conference on 'Babur and the Culture of Central Asia', Ohio State University, 4–5 May, 1984.

2 Shiᶜa biographical literature is discussed in the EI^2 article ᶜilm al-ridjāl' by B. Scarcia Amoretti, and briefly by E. Kohlberg in 'Shiᶜa Hadith' in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 299–307.

3 The anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Lawrence Rosen have commented on the importance of nisba as a concept within the Islamic, in particular, Moroccan system. See, for example, C. Geertz 'From the Native's point of view: On the nature of anthropological understanding', in *Meaning in Anthropology*, ed. Keith H. Basso and Henry A. Selby. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976, p. 234.

4 Bryan S. Turner, in *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974.

5 Wilfred Cantwell Smith, 'The historical development in Islam of the concept of Islam as an historical development' in *On Understanding Islam*. The Hague: Mouton, 1981, pp. 41–77.

6 Hava Lazarus-Yaffe, *Studies in al-Ghazzali*. Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1976, pp. 19–22, 36–37.

7 Henry Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*. New York: Pantheon, 1960.

8 Richard Kurin, 'Morality, personhood, and the exemplary life'. 'Popular conceptions of Muslims in paradise' in Barbara Metcalf *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, pp. 196–220.

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REVIEW ARTICLE

ANTI-SEMITISM: BANALITY OR THE DARKER SIDE OF GENIUS?

Albert S. Lindemann

Moshe Zimmermann, *Wilhelm Marr, the Patriarch of Antisemitism,* Oxford University Press, 1986, 171 pp.

Frederick Busi, *The Pope of Antisemitism: The Career and Legacy of Édouard-Adolphe Drumont*, University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 1986, 221 pp.

Jacob Katz, *The Darker Side of Genius: Richard Wagner's Anti-Semitism*, University Press of New England, Hanover, New Hampshire, 151 pp.

The three books under review all touch on an age-old problem, concerning which there is by now an enormous and contentious literature. How are we to understand anti-Semitism? Is it 'irrational', that is, fundamentally a religious matter, residing in a metaphysical world, derived from religious habits of mind? Should it, in contrast, be understood in 'rational' terms, as a reflection of real conflict between Jews and non-Jews over material goods? Or, does anti-Semitism simply derive from the psychological disorders of individual personalities, which in turn find expression in religious language or in the language of social and economic conflict?

One school of thought has described hatred for Jews as having little to do with action by Jews but rather as derived from Gentile cultural pathologies, fantasies about Jews, and psychological disorder. An opposing school has criticized the notion of 'innocent Jews' as inspired primarily by apologetic and, ultimately, dishonest instincts on the part of Jews; this school insists that real Jews, as distinguished from fantasies about them, have been of central importance in provoking anti-Semitism. However, in the wide spectrum from seeing 'innocent Jews' to concluding that 'they have been hated for good reason' are to be found intermediate positions of considerable subtlety, and most serious scholars of anti-Semitism have placed themselves somewhere in that wide intermediate range.

Closely scrutinizing the lives and personalities of individual anti-Semites

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in history is one obvious way of trying to understand anti-Semitisim, and in particular of determining how much individual psychological traits have played a central role in it. Moshe Zimmermann, Chairman of the Department of History at the Hebrew University, opens his biography of Wilhelm Marr with the complaint that 'historians, psychologists, sociologists, and publicists have invested a great deal of effort in the study and evaluation of the phenomenon of anti-Semitism, without paying much attention to the anti-Semites'. He notes that we, of course, all know about Hitler and perhaps a few other famous men who were also anti-Semites, but very little attention has been devoted to 'regular' or ordinary anti-Semites, men who did not much excel in anything but their hatred of Jews. The 'proof' of this lacuna, he tells us, is found in the fact that [Julius] 'Streicher, the prototype of the most vulgar kind of anti-Semitism, earned the right to a serious biography only in 1974, and little has been written about him since.'

As I will further develop below, Zimmermann seriously overstates the case in his effort to persuade us of the value and timeliness of his biography, but his point is nevertheless easily accepted that our attempts to arrive at a theoretical understanding of anti-Semitism need to be tested as widely as possible by biographies of anti-Semites, whether 'ordinary' or 'extraordinary', mediocre or great.

Biographies were a staple of historical writing for much of the 19th and early 20th centuries, but in the past thirty to forty years significant numbers of the most talented and imaginative professional historians have turned their attention away from a narrative-humanistic study of elites, of Great Men, to scrutinize 'history from below', to use social science approaches, quantification and various structuralist perspectives. What Zimmermann seems to suggest is that 'history from the middle', using traditional biographical perspectives, deserves a more careful exploration than it has so far received. Figures like Marr, Streicher, Drumont or Theodor Fritsch,[1] cannot be considered members of the inarticulate, non-literate masses (and thus of special interest to the new generation of historians), yet it is difficult to consider them Great Men, the movers and shakers of history, either.

In terms of understanding anti-Semitism, the concept of history from the middle is interesting for several reasons. One prominent theory asserts that hatred of Jews in modern times has been most characteristically an expression of the insecure or threatened middle orders, of the petty bourgeoisie in particular. The clamorous popular response to Marr's booklet, *Der Sieg des Judenthums über das Germanenthum* ('The Victory of Jewry over Germany'), published in 1879 and known as the first anti-Semitic best-seller, has normally been interpreted as an expression of the anxiety of the lower-middle class about its declining status and dismal prospects in a rapidly modernizing Germany. Much of the recent literature devoted to

Nazism has scrutinized the supposed predilections of the German *Mittelstand* for ideologies of resentment, particularly anti-Semitism.[2]

History from the middle touches on other interesting theoretical matters. Hannah Arendt's study of Adolf Eichmann is not quite a full-fledged, traditional biography, but it certainly provides us with provocative information by means of which we may test general theories.[3] She has suggested that modern totalitarianism was, to a previously unappreciated degree, run by men like Adolf Eichmann, who was a painfully inarticulate, dully ordinary member of the middle ranks in society—thus her controversial term, 'the banality of evil', and her portrayal of Eichmann as a characterless cog in a huge machine: obsequious, punctilious and morally obtuse, rather than demonically driven by personal resentments for Jews. He was concerned mostly with the advancement of his career and with doing the best possible job he could, even if that job was mass murder. He would have followed a similar path in regard to the Czechs, French or, presumably, even his fellow Germans, had his superiors indicated that such was his assigned role. The evidence does not suggest that he was particularly sadistic—he was not much of a hater, not even an anti-Semite of the single-minded sort that Zimmermann thinks should be more carefully studied.[4]

A large number of prominent Nazis appear, paradoxically, to have harbored no unusual, or monomaniacal hatred for Jews. Studies of Himmler,[5] Heydrich,[6] Göring,[7] and a number of other Nazis,[8] both at the top of the Party and in its middle ranks[9] have questioned the importance, or at least centrality, of anti-Semitism in their mental worlds. Even many of those personally closest to Hitler—Hess, Hanfstaengl, or Göring, for example—had Jewish acquaintances, even close friends; Hanfstaengl openly resisted Hitler's diatribes regarding the Jews.[10] Indeed, that anti-Semitism played a secondary role in attracting followers to the Nazi movement has become by now one of the more widely accepted generalizations among scholars, appearing in the earliest studies[11] and repeatedly confirmed by the most recent.[12] There is little question that 'immoderate' attacks on the Jews were often perceived to be a liability by influential party strategists; anti-Semitism was thus played down in order to have greater electoral appeal while the Nazis were trying to win power in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and then attacks on Jews were kept within bounds in order not to disrupt the German economy when the Nazis first came into power. Many observers in Germany expressed doubts about the sincerity of the NSDAP's anti-Semitism; it was seen as just another opportunistic propaganda tool, 'insincere'—to be used one minute and dropped the next—a variety of anti-Semitic agitation long familiar in the pre-war Conservative Party.[13]

Hitler was undoubtedly 'sincere', but he was exceptional in his monomania about Jews; there were surprisingly few others in the Party leadership who shared it, as he himself at times seemed to sense.[14] Julius Streicher, whose monomania was similar to Hitler's, was an embarrassment to many in the Party. Indeed, he was privately reviled by most Party leaders; his position in the Party was due to an important degree to Hitler's continued personal support. Even with that support, his influence in the upper councils of the NSDAP, never very great, steadily diminished in the 1930s.[15] Anti-Semitic initiatives taken by other Party leaders, most notably Göbbels and Himmler, are best understood as reflections of their psychological and intellectual subservience to Hitler.

A related conclusion that has emerged in recent scholarship, with less unanimity, however, is that the Final Solution is best understood not as the result of popular anti-Semitism or even anti-Semitism in the Nazi Party but, rather, was a response to Hitler's own initiatives in the context of the particular pressures and dilemmas, both internal and external, faced by the Nazi State in the late 1930s and early 1940s.[16] That Streicher, sentenced to death at Nuremberg, himself had no direct involvement with either the planning or execution of the Final Solution is one of the more surprising facts to emerge from the several studies of him. Franz Stangl, on the other hand, Commandant of Treblinka and directly involved in the murder of Jews, was almost certainly not anti-Semitic, particularly not to the degree that Streicher was.[17] Yet if one accepts that popular anti-Semitism was not directly responsible for the Holocaust, Streicher's lack of direct involvement and Stangl's deep involvement finally make a kind of sense.

In attempting to test theories about anti-Semitism in the mediocre middle, inevitable difficulties arise in deciding who is to be considered mediocre, and, even more, who is an anti-Semite. Is the issue of ordinariness to be dealt with primarily as a matter of class origins? Or is it quality of mind, certain psychological traits? Was Eichmann typical, or an odd exception, granting that Arendt has presented him to us accurately (and of course some vehemently deny that she has done that).[18] What would a non-banal, 'first-rate' anti-Semite be like? Does the very concept of anti-Semitism not strongly imply a petty and mean hatred? Is it possible for a genius, for a person of genuinely great abilities to be also an anti-Semite—or, even, to be a genius *specifically as* an anti-Semite?

Before Hannah Arendt had suggested that Nazi functionaries might be banal and morally obtuse rather than demonic and brutish, a sharply contrasting image of the Nazi officer had often been presented. At its simplest such an officer was familiar in Hollywood films—highly cultivated, anything but banal, a man who could play a Mozart sonata, quote Goethe, and still murder and torture in a cold, chilling way. In part this older image satisfied a yearning to have villains of genuinely demonic stature.

Eichmann is a wholly unsatisfactory villain; we yearn for a hunchbacked Richard III, whom we can hate without reservation, and whose death provides us with a proper catharsis. We have our own psychological needs, in ways ironically like those of the anti-Semite. Just as the anti-Semite needs to 'create' a demonic Jew who satisfies his fantasy world, so we need to create a demonic anti-Semite or Nazi functionary. To discover that many of them, even those directly involved in mass murder, lacked demonic dimensions—at least to the degree that they appear 'normal'—is an unsettling and threatening matter.

It hardly need be said that there were Nazis who were not banal—Joseph Göbbels and Hermann Göring are familiar examples. And there were sadistic brutes, like Christian Wirth, demonic enough to satisfy our most pressing needs in that regard. Reinhard Heydrich, the awesomely efficient head of the Sicherheitsdienst and probably the main architect of the Final Solution, played the violin brilliantly, was an olympic-class athlete, a daring fighter pilot, and unquestionably had a first-rate mind. Again, although the thought is unsettling, he seems to have been a subtle and sensitive spirit, at least in many spheres of his life, separate from his official duties. Albert Speer was uncontestably a man of unusual abilities, one who indeed comes across as normal and eminently sane in a way that neither Göbbels nor Heydrich quite do.[19] These men, and a large number of others in the second layer of Nazi leadership, cannot be considered German *Spiesser*, petty-bourgeois philistines. Most of the nihilistic, often homosexual *condottieri* around Ernst Röhm also were not—quite the opposite, they enjoyed taunting conventional burghers and philistines both outside and inside the movement.[20] In short, the personality types and levels of ability in the Nazi Party were extremely diverse; they do not easily fit into a mold of lower-middle-class resentment. It is most difficult to think of any other kind of mold into which they might be fit.

The works under review also offer reason to doubt that in the 19th century anti-Semites may be fit into a mold of mediocrity and resentment. Similarly, we do not encounter in them a single personality type. Wagner obviously must be considered a Great Man; Katz refers to the 'darker side' of his 'genius'. That is a familiar enough concept; we are used to the idiosyncracies of the artistic temperament. Few great artists, up close, are genial and even-tempered. Katz makes clear that Wagner was indeed full of resentments and suspicions—again, common enough among artists—and he offers ingenious if not fully persuasive arguments to explain why Wagner directed his resentments at Jews. Still, Wagner's fame and genius were as a composer, not an anti-Semite. His anti-Semitic tract, 'Das Judentum in der Musik' ('Jewry in Music'), was first published in 1850, anonymously, in *Neue Zeitschift für Musik*. It passed largely unnoticed at that time and in the ensuing two decades, when anti-Semitism remained subdued and relatively unimportant compared with the 1880s and 1890s.

Drumont was, in contrast, 'great' in terms of gaining fame (or notoriety) as an anti-Semite; without his anti-Semitic writings he would find no place in our history books. His *La France juive*, ('Jewish France'), first published in 1886, went through some 200 editions; it became the greatest best-seller in France before World War I. But, at least in terms of intellectual content and coherence, this two-volume book and Drumont's other writings on the Jews can hardly qualify as great. They are an often absurd mish-mash of anti-Semitic gossip, confused, contradictory, without the slightest effort at balance or critical acumen—and proudly so!—far lower in tone and coherence than Wagner's 'Judentum' or Marr's *Sieg*, if considerably more long-winded. On the other hand, Drumont, too, had a kind of genius. Particularly in his pieces evoking the charm of his beloved Paris he could compose moving passages.[21] His talents as a muckraking journalist were widely esteemed at the time, and are recognized in the study under review as 'of the first order'.[22]

Even the ordinariness of Marr, who is presented to us by Zimmermann as a kind of model by which we can measure mediocrity, is not really borne out by the information that Zimmermann himself offers us. In the 1840s, according to Zimmermann, Marr's name was more widely known, and respected, than it was in the 1880s. He was earlier famous, however, not as an anti-Semite but as a radical leftist. And to describe him as someone who hated Jews because of his lower-middle-class resentments and anxieties is—to say the least—much too simple, again, by the very evidence supplied in Zimmermann's biography.

If an examination of recent biographies of leading Nazis provides us with some surprising information about their attitudes to Jews, so do these three biographies—and indeed a number of others dealing with 19th century anti-Semites. We find, for example, that an astonishing number of them had at some point in their lives not only extensive contact with Jews but also remarkably positive experiences with them—close friends, respected teachers, even lovers and spouses!

It is fairly widely known that Göbbels once had a Jewish fiancée; so did Marr, but of his three legal wives, the second was a full-blooded Jew and the third a half-Jew. By Marr's own ample testimony, the most deeply-felt love of his life was for the second, Jewish wife, who died in childbirth, as did her child—which nearly drove this 'patriarch of anti-Semitism' to suicide. The third marriage was much less happy, even though it produced a healthy son. The third wife, herself filled with hostility to Jews, seems to have encouraged Marr in his anti-Semitic publications and activities. Yet to the end of his long life, Marr kept up friendly correspondence with Jewish acquaintances. Such was true in the 1880s, at the height of his fame as an anti-Semite, as it was in his final years, when, interestingly, he renounced anti-Semitism and denounced the anti-Semites as being worse than the Jews.

The friendships and loves of anti-Semites for individual Jews is a theme that might itself be the subject of a lengthy separate essay. It has found a recent poignant novelistic expression.[23] In a speech that has by now been widely quoted, Heinrich Himmler gave startling evidence of it in the Third Reich. He complained that while all good Nazis agreed the Jews had to be exterminated, they nevertheless all had Jewish friends: 'Then they all come along, the eighty million good Germans, and each one has his decent Jew. Of course the others are swine, but this one is a first-class Jew'.[24] These hugely contradictory relationships have been so common that one is tempted to regard them not as odd exceptions but rather some kind of norm, one that begs for further exploration and explanation from theorists.

Many 19th century anti-Semites besides Marr had intimate relations with Jews. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the 'evangelist of race', is normally considered to have exercised a major influence on Nazi doctrine. In the 1920s, paralysed and on his death bed, he allowed himself to be lionized by the Nazis. But before World War I he repeatedly denied harboring any personal animus against Jews. His *Foundations of the Twentieth Century* (1899), filled with negative conclusions about the influence of Jews in history, was nevertheless dedicated to a Jewish professor under whom he had once studied. He insisted, indeed, that he had 'remarkably many Jews or half-Jews for friends, to whom I am very close.' He had no use for the anti-Semitic agitators of the time, and attacked the 'revolting tendency to make the Jew the scapegoat of all the vices of the time. . . . A German idiot or a Teutonic ass is much less congenial to me than a serious and productive artist of Jewish heritage. . . . I need only refer to Lueger and Mahler'.[25] Fritz Stern has shown, in a biographical study of four proto-nazi ideologues (of what he terms the 'Germanic ideology'), how often Jewish friends and acquaintances are to be found, in spite of often venomous attacks on the Jewish influence in Germany.[26]

Drumont's Jewish acquaintances were much more limited, but Frederick Busi's *The Pope of Antisemitism* points out that before Drumont turned to anti-Semitism as a literary career, he not only worked for the Péreires, enormously powerful Jewish entrepreneurs and financiers, but was full of praise for them and other Jews; his 'praise of prominent Jews was just as flattering as his later denunciations were vicious'.[27] Similarly, Drumont maintained friendships with many first-rate writers and artists who themselves were known to be friendly to Jews or at least were not identified with anti-Semitism, including the 19th century literary giant, Victor Hugo, who wrote that he found in Drumont a 'noble mind, a noble heart'.[28]

Wagner's contacts with Jews were the most extensive, complex, and paradoxical of all three. Before his article of 1850, he might well have passed for a philo-Semite; there is little evidence of hatred for Jews, with whom he had extensive contact, in his public or private pronouncements in the 1840s. Even after the article was published, indeed throughout his life, Wagner maintained often intimate relations with a large number of Jews (although the word 'intimate' hardly captures the ambiguous, bizarre nature of these relationships). In his memoirs, he called his friendship with the Jew, Samuel Lehrs, 'one of the most beautiful . . . of my life'.[29] Even after Wagner had republished his pamphlet in his own name in 1869, and after the anti-Semites in Germany began to acclaim him as one of their heroes, he maintained extensive and often close contacts with Jews. His favorite conductor remained Hermann Levi, the son of a rabbi. 'Friend Rubenstein' (in Cosima Wagner's words), a talented young Jewish musician who idolized Wagner, lived with the Wagners for extended periods.[30] Among Wagner's admiring audiences and financial supporters, Jews for many years remained extremely prominent.

Perhaps the most puzzling case of all was that of Hitler, for he ostensibly had clearer cause to be a friend of the Jews than their enemy. As a young man, he vowed to the Jewish doctor, Edward Bloch, who had treated his dying mother, that 'I shall be grateful to you forever'. In Vienna, the Hungarian Jew Josef Neumann was one of Hitler's few friends, and a most generous one to Hitler in time of need. Hitler called him 'a very decent man', whom he esteemed highly. Hitler often sold his paintings to Jewish art dealers, remarking that he preferred to do so because such dealers would 'take chances [on unestablished painters like him]'. It was a Jewish superior officer, First Lieutenant Hugo Hoffmann, who initiated the award of Iron Cross, First Class, for Hitler.[31] In contrast, we have little credible evidence in Hitler's life of what might be termed real-life Jewish enemies, that is, with names and concrete identities, as distinguished from anonymous malefactors, hated political figures, or Jews seen from afar (such as the Jewish soldiers, agitating for revolution in 1918, whom Hitler resentfully observed while recovering from battle injuries). Even his famous description, in *Mein Kampf*, of his fascinated disgust in encountering a khasidic Jew in Vienna for the first time, has all the marks of inauthenticity, of something dramatically projected back onto the past, rather than a real experience.[32]

A further and related paradox that emerges from the life stories of these anti-Semites is that a strikingly large number of them were charged with having Jewish ancestors. Such charges (or whispered rumors) were widely made in regard to Marr, Drumont and Wagner; Hitler, Heydrich and

Streicher are other prominent examples. Whether these allegations were true or not—and the evidence for Jewish ancestry in each of the above cases is weak—the psychological impact of such aspersions are of particular interest. A number of Hitler's biographers have suggested that his supposed Jewish ancestry had something to do with his phobia concerning body odors (since Jews were supposed to have a peculiar odor); even his odd mustache was to draw attention away from his too-prominent ('Jewish') nose. More broadly, the evidence that Hitler was haunted by rumours of his Jewish ancestry is rather strong.[33] In Heydrich's case, a plausible explanation of his extraordinary 'hardness' in carrying out orders against the Jews was his desire to shake off any aspersions that he might be soft in that regard, although his role in the Final Solution is not easily summarized.[34] One of the more brutal associates of Adolf Eichmann, Alois Brunner, was taunted for his 'Jewish' looks.[35]

From the works I have cited so far, it should be obvious that I can hardly agree with Zimmermann that we lack studies of individual anti-Semites, ordinary and extraordinary, even if further studies would be welcome. Aside from the scores of elaborately detailed biographies of Hitler, of very mixed quality,[36] we can now consult a large number of biographical studies of other leading Nazis,[37] offering rich, detailed, and—again—often bewildering information concerning their lives and mental worlds.

Even setting aside biographies of Nazis (and, undoubtedly, the sensationalism with which they are so often surrounded poses serious problems in terms of the kinds of biographers they have sometimes attracted) the student of anti-Semitism can refer to a significant number of penetrating biographies of 19th and 20th century anti-Semites.[38] If we are to include as biographies the venerable genre of 'so-and-so and the Jewish question', where anti-Semitism is not always clear or explicit, the list lengthens.[39] And, if we include, which seems perfectly justified, standard biographical studies of Great Men who harbored a little known hatred for Jews (such as Voltaire,[40] or Henry Adams[41]) the raw data, so to speak, with which we can test our theories becomes even greater. If we add to our list the Jewish self-haters, or Jewish anti-Semites (for example, Karl Marx,[42] Ferdinand Lassalle,[43] Karl Kraus,[44] Simone Weil,[45] and Kurt Tucholsky[46]), we are finally presented with an over-abundance of evidence rather than a dearth.

The volumes by Zimmermann, Katz and Busi range very broadly in quality. It will be no surprise to those who know Professor Katz's many other works that this volume is first-rate, a genuine contribution, written with erudition, historical sophistication, and interpretive vigor. The range and depth of Professor Zimmermann's scholarship is less impressive; he fails to tell us much that is especially insightful about the historical environment in which Marr's writings received so much attention. His writing and reasoning, similarly, are not always as smooth or clear as might be desired. Still, he has earned the debt of scholars for presenting much previously unknown and fascinating material about Marr. Scholars can also thank Professor Busi for putting together between two covers much information about Drumont not easily available elsewhere, but on the whole his book is deeply disappointing. It is without question the most atrociously edited volume I have ever encountered. The reader is obliged to work through murky prose, wooden reasoning, repetitive passages, sentences with missing words, unfinished footnotes, poor punctuation, and simply grotesque typos.

We can no doubt learn something about anti-Semitism from these three biographies, even if what we learn is hardly surprising: anti-Semitism remains an extraordinarily elusive matter. What is surprising is how little hatred of Jews can be matched with what is plausibly considered the culmination and apotheosis of modern anti-Semitism, the Holocaust. We discover that anti-Semites can be dense and mean, but also sensitive and highly intelligent; they can be dogmatically sincere, but also flexibly insincere, idealistic or cynical, racist or non-racist, religious or secular—a list of such antitheses could be very long indeed. Anti-Semitism, one is tempted to conclude, has much in common with AIDS. In other words, just as that virus is so deeply intertwined into the very structure of human cells that a cure for it may long elude us, anti-Semitism, too, so merges into basic matters of human identity and culture, into the infinitely elusive human psyche, that we would be foolish to expect a cure for it in the immediate future.

NOTES

1 Another 'ordinary' or second-rate anti-Semite, an engineer by training, who turned singled-mindedly to anti-Semitic agitation in the 1880s, producing a *Handbook of Anti-Semitism* that went through thirty-six editions before World War I. Cf. Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700–1933* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), 304ff; Richard S. Levy, *The Downfall of the Anti-Semitic Political Parties in Imperial Germany* (New Haven, 1975), 37–39, 261–263.

2 Richard F. Hamilton, *Who Voted For Hitler?* (Princeton, 1982), 9ff. provides a useful review of the literature. See also, Heinrich A. Winkler, *Mittelstand, Demokratie und Nationalsozialismus* (Cologne, 1972); and Michael H. Kater, *The Nazi Party: A Social Profile of Members and Leaders, 1919–1945* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983).

3 *Eichmann in Jerusalem, a Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York, 1962). See also, Jochen von Lang, ed., *Eichmann Interrogated: Transcripts from the Archives of the Israeli Police* (New York, 1983).

4 Cf. S. Miligram, *Obedience to Authority* (New York, 1974) for a development of the theme that Nazis were 'normal', that it was the social and political structures

within which they operated that were abnormal. For a spirited critique of this perspective: F. Miale and Michael Selzer, *The Nuremberg Mind: Psychological Studies of the Nazi Leadership* (New York, 1976).

5 Cf. Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel, *Himmler* (New York, 1965); but especially Bradley F. Smith, *Heinrich Himmler: A Nazi in the Making, 1900–1926* (Stanford, Calif., 1971); and Peter Loewenberg, 'The Unsuccessful Adolescence of Heinrich Himmler', *American Historical Review*, vol. 76, no. 3, June 1971, pp. 612–631.

6 Günther Deschner, *Reinhard Heydrich, a Biography* (Briarcliff Manor, New York, 1981); Edouard Calic, *Reinhard Heydrich: The Chilling Story of the Man Who Mastermined the Nazi Death Camps* (New York, 1985) is a less penetrating, more emotional account.

7 R. J. Overy, *Goering, the "Iron Man"* (Boston, 1984), and Stefan Martens, *Hermann Göring: "erster Paladin des Fuhrers" und "zweiter Mann im Reich"* (Paderborn, Germany, 1985).

8 Cf. the portraits in Joachim C. Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich: Portraits of the Nazi Leadership* (New York, 1970), particularly of Ernst Röhm, Albert Speer, and Baldur von Schirach.

9 Kater, *Nazi Party*; also, Peter Merkl, *Political Violence Under the Third Reich: 581 Early Nazis* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1975).

10 John Toland, *Adolf Hitler* (New York, 1976), 167–168, 176; Wulf Schwarzwaller, *Rudolf Hess, der Letzte von Spondau* (Vienna, 1974).

11 Cf. Michael Müller-Claudius, *Der Antisemitismus und das deutsche Verhängnis* (Frankfurt am Main, 1948), based on numerous interviews of Nazis immediately following the war.

12 Aside from the above-mentioned studies, see Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* (New York, 1987).

13 Cf. Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship* (New York, 1970).

14 He explained to Helene Hanfstaengl, a woman to whom he was close and who like her husband had contacts in the Jewish artistic world, that his hatred of Jews was a 'personal thing'; quoted in Toland, *Hitler*, 62.

15 Randall L. Bytwerk, *Julius Streicher* (New York, 1983); Dennis E. Showalter, *Little Man, What Now: Der Stürmer in the Weimar Republic* (Hamden, Conn.), 1982; Paul Varga, *The Number One Nazi Jew-Baiter: A Political Biography of Julius Streicher, Hitler's Chief Anti-Semitic Propagandist* (New York, 1981). In the light of these volumes Zimmermann's complaint that little has been written about Streicher 'since 1974' is puzzling.

16 The literature dealing with how the various 'solutions' to the Jewish question evolved into the Final Solution, particularly on Hitler's role, is too vast to explore here. A provocative recent essay touching directly on the significance of Hitler's anti-Semitism is Milton Himmelfarb, 'No Hitler, no Holocaust', *Commentary*, vol. 77, No. 33, March 1984, pp. 37–43. On a more scholarly level, contrasting viewpoints may be found in Karl Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Ausschwitz: Nazi Policy Toward German Jews, 1933–39* (Urbana, Illinois, 1970); Gerald Fleming, *Hitler and the Final Solution* (New York, 1984); Uwe Dietrich Adam, *Judenpolitik im Dritten Reich* (Düsseldorf, 1972); and Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews* (New York, 1975).

17 Cf. Gitta Sereny, *Into that Darkness* (New York, 1974). This work is primarily an attempt to understand Franz Stangl, based on lengthy interviews of him

and those who knew him.

18 Cf. Norman Podhoretz, 'Hannah Arendt on Eichmann: A Study in the Perversity of Brilliance', *Commentary*, vol. 36, No. 3, Sept. 1963, pp. 201–298; Jacob Robinson, *And the Crooked Shall Be Made Straight* (New York, 1968).

19 Cf. Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (New York, 1970). In this and Speer's other works, however much mendacity subtly plays a role, one cannot help but recognise a certain high quality of mind and spirit, especially in comparison to other Nazi leaders. See Matthias Schmidt, *Albert Speer: The End of a Myth* (New York, 1984).

20 Jean Mabire, *Röhm, l'homme qui inventa Hitler* (Paris, 1983).

21 *Mon Vieux Paris* (Paris, 1878).

22 Busi, *Drumont*, 89.

23 Gregor von Rezzori, *Memoirs of an Anti-Semite* (New York, 1981).

24 Fest, *Face*, 115.

25 Geoffrey Field, *Evangelist of Race: The Germanic Vision of Houston Stewart Chamberlain* (New York, 1980), 155, 159, 186.

26 Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley, Calif., 1961).

27 Busi, *Pope*, 35.

28 *Ibid*., 42. Michael Winnock, *Édouard Drumont et Cie: Antisémitisme et fascisme en France* (Paris, 1982), 92ff., devotes some interesting pages to the collaboration, before the Dreyfus Affair, of Jean Jaurès and Drumont.

29 Katz, *Wagner*, 24.

30 Katz, *Genius*, 99 ff. Katz defends Levi from being a self-hating Jew; Levi did not, at least, abase himself before Wagner the way that Rubinstein did. However, he harbored profoundly ambiguous feelings about Judaism. See the chapter in Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews, and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture* (Oxford, 1978), 189ff.

31 John Toland, *Hitler* (New York, 1976), 37, 61, 95.

32 *Mein Kampf* (New York, 1971), 56.

33 Cf. Robert G. L. Waite *The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler* (New York, 1977).

34 Cf. Günther Deschner, *Reinhard Heydrich* (Briarcliff Manor, New York, 1981), 60ff.

35 Cf. Mary Felstiner, 'Alois Brunner, "Eichmann's Best Tool"', *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual*, vol. 3, 1986, 4.

36 From the standpoint of understanding Hitler's anti-Semitism and of providing rich details about his life, the biographies by Toland and Waite, cited above, are the most satisfactory. See also Sarah Gordon, *Hitler and the Jewish Question* (Princeton, 1985).

37 Aside from those already mentioned, see Harald Peuschal, *Die Männer um Hitler* (Düsseldorf, 1982); Fritz Nova, *Alfred Rosenberg, Nazi Theorist of the Holocaust* (New York, 1986).

38 Field's study of Chamberlain, cited above, is of extraordinary merit, but also first-rate are Andrew G. Whiteside, *The Socialism of Fools: Georg Ritter von Schönerer and Austrian Pan-Germanism* (Berkeley, Calif., 1975); Carl Schorske, *Fin de Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York, 1979) (dealing with both von Schönerer and Karl Lueger); Andreas Dorpalen *Heinrich von Treitschke* (New Haven, Conn., 1957); C. Vann Woodward, *Tom Watson, Agrarian Rebel* (New York, 1938). To be read with care, but still full of useful information is Walter Frank, *Hofprediger Stöcker und die christlichsoziale Bewegung*

(Hamburg, 1935).

39 A sampling: Franz Kolber, *Napoleon and the Jews* (New York, 1975); Albert Lee, *Henry Ford and the Jews* (New York, 1981); Giorgio Pisano, *Mussolini e gli ebrei* (Milan, 1967); Meir Michaeilis, *Mussolini and the Jews: German-Italian Relations and the Jewish Question, 1922–45* (Oxford, 1978); Michael Stanislawsky, *Nicholas I and the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1983); Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews* (Berkeley, 1983). There is as well the somewhat different genre, typified by Alfred D. Low's, *Jews in the Eyes of Germans* (Philadelphia, 1979), which provides many short biographies, and sometimes interesting insights into the character of various anti-Semites.

40 The treatment of Voltaire in Arthur Hertzberg's *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York, 1968) is particularly enlightening, if inconclusive.

41 Cf. W. C. Ford, ed., *Letters of Henry Adams, 1892–1918* (New York, 1938), vol. 2, pp. 110ff., 338, 620, for examples of his anti-Semitic sentiments.

42 Nathaniel Weyl, *Karl Marx, Racist* (New Rochell, N.Y., 1979) is polemical and lacking in balance but includes most of the relevant texts; Robert Wistrich's chapters on Marx, in his *Socialism and the Jews: The Dialectics of Emancipation in Germany and Austria-Hungary* (East Brunswick, New Jersey, 1984), and his *Revolutionary Jews from Marx to Trotsky* (London, 1976) set a higher scholarly standard.

43 Schlomo Na'aman, *Ferdinand Lassalle* (Hannover, 1968).

44 Edward Timms, *Karl Kraus, Apocalypic Satirist* (New Haven, 1986).

45 Paul Giniewski, *Simone Weil: ou la haine de soi* (Paris, 1978); Simone Petrement, *Simone Weil, A Life* (New York, 1976).

46 Harold Poor, *Kurt Tucholsky and the Ordeal of Germany* (New York, 1968).

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(Hamburg, 1937).
[illegible] Franz [illegible], *Napoleon and the Jews* (New York, 1972). Also
[illegible] *Pope and the Jews* (New York, 1963), George [illegible]
(Stuttgart, 1967); Mark [illegible], *Mazzini and the Jewish Question*
[illegible] and the Jewish Question, [illegible] (Berlin, 1969); Michael
[illegible], *Eminent Jews* [illegible] *of Philadelphia* (1959); Robert L. Welch,
John Chapman and the [illegible] (Berkeley, 1983). There is an excellent somewhat
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[illegible] Na'aman, [illegible] (Hanover, 1968).
Edward Timms, *Karl Kraus, Apocalyptic Satirist* (New Haven, 1986).
Paul [illegible], [illegible] (Paris, 1898); [illegible]
[illegible] (New York, 1966) [illegible]
Harold Fisch, *The Dual Image* [illegible] (New York, 1971).

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Religion (1988) **18,** 197–198

REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

James Turner, *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America.* Baltimore and London, The John Hopkins University Press, 1985, 316 + xviii pp. Price: $26.50 hardcover; $12.95 paperback.

James Turner interprets late 19th-century American agnosticism as a product of Protestant theology. He argues that Protestant theologians recast Christian theology in scientistic terms by defending belief in God on the basis of observable evidence. He argues further that this scientistic theology was the foundation upon which Victorian unbelievers constructed their system of moral agnosticism. Thus in Turner's view, late 19th-century agnosticism was not simply a rebellion against scientistic Protestant theology but a logical extension of it as well.

The story Turner unfolds is complex, ironic and engaging. In Part I, 'Modern Belief, 1500–1865', Turner contrasts the mechanistic language about God characteristic of Reformed theologians and the anxiety characteristic of early Protestant culture with the unquestioned and frequently insouciant confidence in the existence of God that characterized medieval life. Turner argues that early Protestant theologians anxiously defended the existence of God against modern science with language borrowed from scientific discourse. Later, Deists added their confidence in the rational order of nature to the Protestant strategy of defending God's existence on the basis of natural design. Turner argues that evangelicals and romantics had a deistic confidence that God's existence was observable in nature, even though many of them scoffed at Deism because of the atheism they thought it implied. To cap his argument about the scientistic nature of Protestant theology, Turner interprets the emotionalism of evangelical and romantic theologies as a scientism of intuition in which personal experiences of God counted as proofs of his existence.

Turner defends these arguments with great liveliness and uses them to set the stage for his discussion of Victorian agnosticism in America. In Part II, 'Modern Unbelief, 1865–1890', he argues that new theories in biology, anthropology, and biblical criticism coincided with the idea that belief in God was actually immoral insofar as it justified pain and suffering or encouraged passivity in the face of pain and suffering. This coincidence of ideas led many intellectuals to an agnostic humanism. Turner shows that agnostics perceived their humanism as a morally superior alternative to scientistic theism. By underscoring the rationalistic view of humanity characteristic of Victorian agnosticism, Turner shows that it was also the heir of that theism.

Although Turner tells a fascinating, informative story, he has a highly questionable sub-agenda that shapes the story's tone and conclusion. This sub-agenda surfaces in his argument that Victorian agnosticism and the scientistic theologies that preceded it were not inevitable reactions to science but rather, like a 'pedestrian (who) flings himself in front of a moving automobile' (p. 260), accidents of history. As his figure of speech implies, Turner believes that attempts to prove the existence of God by arguments based on observable demonstration are at least misguided if not downright suicidal. This judgment is an expression of his neo-orthodox opinion that God is wholly other to human experience and that attempts to define him with rational logic or observable evidence misrepresent his true nature as the inscrutable ground of being.

Although Turner's neo-orthodox theology surfaces only occasionally, it skews the whole argument of the book. It enables him to present agnostic humanism as bad theology, rather than as a valuable if incomplete effort to relinquish theology. In his alertness to Victorian agnosticism's failure to wholly escape theology, Turner is insensitive to the genuine contributions it made in freeing intellectual discourse from theology. By defining and condemning agnostic humanism on theological grounds, Turner imposes on his subjects a latter-day version of the Calvinist determinism that they sought to free themselves and their students from.

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Henry Chadwick, *Augustine* (Past Masters). Oxford/New York, Oxford University Press, 1986.

This excellent little book supplies a long-felt need: a concise, up-to-date introduction to Augustine's ideas and 'the making of his mind' (p. 1). No one is better qualified than Henry Chadwick to undertake this task with informed and eloquent precision. In 120 pages he succeeds in elucidating Augustine's Neoplatonism, his Manichaeism, his views on semantics, the Trinity, and predestination, on sexuality, and much else besides. Where Peter Brown's biography (London, 1967) brilliantly evoked Augustine's milieu and the development of his personality as a man of late antiquity, Chadwick charts his intellectual range and progress as theologian and philosopher, not neglecting social and political influences (e.g. on his attitudes to Donatist schismatics, 75 ff.), but effectively complementing Brown's portrait and making it more intelligible to those concerned with Augustine's legacy. Despite brevity of scope, Chadwick succeeds in suggesting the tentative, exploratory nature of Augustine's views on the Trinity (92 ff.), or the considerable scientific importance of his often-neglected cosmology (87 ff.), to name but two examples out of many. I found the section on free will (pp. 38–40) too general to be fully satisfactory, and missed a broader discussion of the general principles of Augustine's ethics; and I would urge that Plotinus, and not Augustine, first elaborated the notion of the subconscious (pp. 3, 49). However, such quibbles apart, there is more than enough for which to be thankful when, as here, a present master expounds a past one.

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Religion (1988) **18,** 293–309

VERBAL CRAFT AND RELIGIOUS ACT IN THE *ILIAD*:

The Dynamics of a Communal Centre[1]

Gregory D. Alles

25/11/09

The collocation of elements at the centre of the Achaian camp in the *Iliad*—the *agorē*, *themis*, and the altars—presents a challenge to current ways of thinking about religious communal centres. Cosmological symbolism (Mircea Eliade) and the attempt to embody cosmo-magical power (Paul Wheatley) do not account for the characteristics of this centre. Examination of the activities associated with the elements at the centre of the camp, in contrast with similar activities in a society where cosmological symbolism is prevalent, suggests that the Achaian camp is structured by a different sort of power, a power that is not cosmo-magical, but strictly social.

Patroklos is running from Nestor's hut. At the centre of the Achaian camp he comes to the ships of godlike Odysseus.[2] There he meets a wounded Eurypolos, and for four books his attention is diverted.

In the present paper, Homer's story does not interest me so much as its setting.

> . . . Patroklos, running, came to the ships
> of godlike Odysseus, where for them
> was the assembly [*agorē*] and *themis*·
> and where were established the altars of the gods.
>
> *Iliad* 11.806–808 (my trans.)

M. Eliade and P. Wheatley (among others) have taught us to scrutinize communal centres carefully. The juxtaposition of these three elements is not accidental.[3] The place of assembly (*agorē*), *themis* ('adjudication'), and the altars of the gods stand next to one another, in Athens as well as on the banks of Troy.[4]

But the analysis of centres that Eliade and Wheatley provide does not help us isolate what is distinctive about the centre of the Achaian camp. The world of the *Iliad* does not provide convincing examples of the cosmological symbols historians of religions have been accustomed to find elsewhere, such common fare as *axis mundi* and *imago mundi*. Nor does Homer

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portray the cosmo-magical power that Wheatley finds at the heart of the seven regions of primary urbanization. To extend one of J. Z. Smith's insights farther than he originally intended: perhaps this is because in the *Iliad* the Achaians have no developed system of kingship, with which such cosmological symbols are generally associated.[5] But cosmology aside, even the type of analysis that Eliade practised with such finesse—the exploration of a static system of symbols grounded in a logic of spatial orientation—holds little promise for elucidating the Achaian centre, for, at least as I read him, Homer shows little interest in any symbolic matrix of orientation.

To understand the collocation of the assembly, *themis*, and the altars at the centre of the Achaian camp, I want to try a different approach. Rather than looking for symbols of orientation, I will examine what Homer actually sings about, the patterned activities associated with each of these places. Such an approach will produce discussions that may seem odd in a study of a communal centre, but it also opens a possibility for understanding. Wheatley is, I believe, essentially correct when he makes the power of flourishing responsible for the structures of the communal centre. But the activities at the *Iliad's* centre reveal a distinctive kind of power that is realized not in cosmo-magical influence but in persuasion. The *agorē*, *themis*, and the altars to the gods provide three communal locations at which this power can become actual, that is, three places where persuasion can occur.

PERSUADING ONE'S PEERS

Homer gives us a glimpse of the *agorē* almost as soon as his poem begins.

> For nine days the shafts of the god [Apollo] fell throughout the army,
> but on the tenth day, Achilles summoned the host to the *agorē*.
>
> And when they were assembled and come together,
> rising up swift-footed Achilles addressed them.
>
> *Iliad* 1.53–54, 57–58 (my trans.)

The *agorē*, the (place of) assembly, is the setting for one of the two types of act that define the personality of Homer's heroes, of his *aristoi* or best men (for women have their own *aretai*). In battle an *aristos* demonstrates his power in deeds, his military skill. In the assembly, he demonstrates his power in words through verbal craft. Killing and plunder constitute success in fighting. Success in speaking—successful verbal craft—results in persuasion, especially in the persuasion of fellow *aristoi*.[6]

In the *Iliad* speeches that attempt to persuade display consistent and distinctive patterns in every dimension of the act of speaking, patterns that in turn provide a key to the kind of power they embody. Elsewhere, I have subjected these speeches to intense philological scrutiny. Here I will simply illustrate some of the patterns that have emerged with the help of a typical example, the famous speech of Odysseus to Achilles in *Iliad* 9 (vv. 225–306).[7] For convenience, I shall distinguish four ascending levels at which 'Odysseus' can display his verbal craft: diction (that is, the level of sounds, words, and phrases); the individual argument; the elaboration of the argument; and the organization of arguments.

At the level of *diction*, the metrical (and colometric) requirements of Homer's poetry limit Odysseus's craft, but within these limits certain patterns emerge. Exact verbal repetition is generally avoided, with only trivial exceptions. When diction is used for rhetorical purposes, it serves to relate rather than to repeat. There are several fine examples in Odysseus's speech; here it will suffice to quote just one. In the note to the passage I provide the kind of technical metrical analysis that specialists find indispensable. I invite general readers simply to read the text in Greek. I have modified the printed text as follows to emphasize its dictional effects: the significant verbal echoes are printed boldface; these echoes centre upon two nearly homonymous antonyms, *achos* (grief) and *akos* (remedy), that I have placed in diagonal brackets; the vertical lines in the text separate the major units from which the poetic line is constructed; and the beginning of each metrical foot is marked by an *accent aigu* (ʹ). In Greek epic, the foot is a unit of length rather than of stress; all feet are of identical duration, consisting of either two long syllables or one long syllable followed by two shorts.

> *aútōi toí* | *meto***písth’** | **<achos> és***setai,* | *oúde ti mḗchos*
> *rhéchthentós* | *kakou* **ést’** | **<akos> he***úrein:* | *álla polú prin*
> (It will be an <affliction> [*achos*] to you hereafter, there will be no <remedy>
> [*akos*]
> found to heal the evil thing when it has been done. No, beforehand . . .)
> *Iliad* 9.249–250[8]

The close metrical and phonetic parallels link the two centres of the argument—grief and remedy—while the differences, which are governed by the phonetic differences between the two key nouns, emphasize the contrast that marks the impossibility of the one given the other: future *achos* (grief) from present failure to act will preclude any *akos* (remedy).

At the level of *argument*, verbal craft has freer rein, for arguments are not bound by metrical constraints. Nevertheless, we continue to see a concern for relations that avoids repetition and opens onto larger systems, similar to the patterns that we find at the level of diction. Odysseus's charge requires him to offer Agamemnon's gifts:

> Come then, . . . listen to me, while I count off for you
> all the gifts in his shelter that Agamemnon has promised:
> Seven unfired tripods; ten talents' weight of gold; twenty
> shining cauldrons; . . . twelve horses, strong, race-competitors . . .
> *Iliad* 9.262–266

But Odysseus senses that Agamemnon's gifts are not enough, and rightly so. He tries to invoke relations with various *philoi* (or 'friends') in whom Achilles allegedly has an interest: the Argives will die here in Troy; your father told you to hold back your great-hearted *thumos* ('spirit') and avoid *eris* (strife); all the Achaians will give you *timē* (material 'honour')—but of course he does not succeed.

Odysseus tries two argumentative strategies. First, he tries to realign the 'webs' or 'systems' of possessions and relations—although I did not cite enough of the list to include relations—that constitute the standing of the individual *aristos*, his potential reserves of social power. Second, he tries to invoke relations that, presumably, still hold firm, relations that in themselves still retain the power to move Achilles to act. We are beginning to tread on familiar ground: we are beginning to make the acquaintance of a power that is centred in systems of relations, specifically, systems of social relations.

Odysseus's speech also provides an excellent example of one manner in which Homer's characters *elaborate* their persuasional speeches. One figure is noticeably absent. Homer's renowned simile is almost never found in speeches that attempt to persuade. To continue the line of interpretation that I have already begun: in seeking to persuade, Homer's characters make comparisons only with items that fall within the same general systems of relations as those whom they are trying to persuade; that is, they make comparisons only with (exemplary) human beings and with the gods. On the positive side, Odysseus's speech illustrates not so much comparison as the list. The mammoth list of Agamemnon's gifts does contain random juxtapositions: tripods, gold, cauldrons, horses. But such juxtapositions occur only on the smallest of scales. Broad, relational systems encompass these juxtapositions and integrate them into an organic whole: now, Agamemnon promises plunder, then women; when Troy falls, he again promises plunder, and then women. When the Achaians return home, the gifts and their order change, for one does not plunder one's own property. Agamemnon promises first one of his daughters, a woman in marriage rather than as loot, and then entire cities, that is, societies intact rather than plundered.

Similarly, verbal craft at the level of *organization* wields its effects not by exact repetition, but by establishing relations between arguments that open out onto ever broadening systems or webs. Ring composition, a technique by which one argument is sandwiched between layers of other arguments in an expanding series of concentric circles (say A, B, C, B′, A′) is a well-known device in archaic Greek poetry, including Homeric speeches.[9] There are better examples of ring-composition put to rhetorical use in the *Iliad*, but a case can be made that Odysseus's speech represents a lop-sided version of the technique. Its rings are not concentric circles but ellipses sharing one focus in common, the list of Agamemnon's gifts. Odysseus approaches the subject of the gifts by the same path on which he leaves it—the latter, of course, in reverse order: the threat posed by Hektor (*Iliad* 9.229–246; 304–306); the action that is needed immediately and its consequences (9.247–251; 303); the *timē* that Achilles might obtain from all the Achaians (9.252–259; 302–303). Nevertheless, when ring composition is used in speeches that attempt to persuade, arguments are never repeated *exactly*. When Odysseus has completed the list of Agamemnon's gifts, he resumes the topics that he had touched upon earlier, but he uses the occasion to develop further, previously unmentioned aspects of the same arguments.

In my more detailed examination of speeches in the *Iliad*, I postulated that the distinctive form of persuasive speeches results from the interaction of two complementary forces: (1) the formal constraints imposed by the requirements of the formulaic medium (the Homeric poem is a collection of relatively discrete or isolated units, 'formulae'); and (2) the image that the poet and his audience have of what constitutes effective persuasion, or at least of what constitutes a viable effort to mobilize persuasive force. Within the constraints of the formulaic medium, the characteristics of Odysseus's speech outlined above suggest that in the *Iliad*, the power to persuade possesses several distinct traits.

First, the power of persuasion is a *social* power. The available argumentative resources and the effects of persuasion extend only to human beings in interaction and to those who are capable of interacting in the manner of human beings, that is, to personal divinities. Second, the power of persuasion is *systemic*. Isolated acts—whether of diction, argument, or elaboration—are of little value. They gain force as they combine to form an interconnected web, an organically functioning speech. Third, the power of persuasion is *relational*. Not only does the force of the argument reside in the relations to which it can appeal and to the standing of the person addressed. Persuasion only alters persons insofar as they participate in social interactions; it cannot of itself create or destroy them. Finally, the power of persuasion is *economical*. Exact repetition, whether of sound, word, phrase, or argument, is generally avoided. Once a particular persuasive device is stated, its power is spent. Further statements would only be redundant. In Homer, a persuasive device gains force not when it is repeated but when it is supplemented.

To many readers, these characterizations of the power to persuade will probably seem only natural. In good measure we have ourselves inherited them. This sort of power still governs the style of our own rhetorical activity, including our writing for professional journals. A quick glance at another tradition shows quite a different style of persuasion, that is, quite a different power of persuasion in operation. Speeches in the *Vālmīki-Rāmāyaṇa*, the shorter of the two major Sanskrit epics, provide a good contrast for two reasons. First, speeches in Sanskrit epic are composed under formal constraints similar to those that limit speeches in Greek epic, since Sanskrit epic, like Greek epic, is formulaic. Thus, these speeches allow us to hold the formal requirements of poetry somewhat constant and compare the finished products for altered perceptions of what is persuasive. Second, in Vālmīki's India we find Eliade's cosmological symbols and Wheatley's cosmo-magical power decked out in all their finery (and, of course, the god-king at the centre of it all).[10]

In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, power in general is natural, rather than social; individuated or, if you prefer, 'dividuated' (that is, concentrated in relatively isolated, most powerful, often nonphenomenal *bījas* or 'seeds'), rather than systemic; concerned with generation and destruction, rather than with relations; and repetitive, rather than economical. In other words, power occurs in generative or destructive 'spurts' whose effectiveness is directly proportional to repetition and endurance. Even ascetics did not forget this lesson of the paradigmatic generative act.

Verbal craft changes appropriately. The speech with which Sītā implores Rāvaṇa—if 'implore' is the right word—when Rāvaṇa attempts to seduce her in Janasthana is a good example. On the level of diction, Vālmīki—or, if you prefer, Sītā—revels in what Homer shuns. She does not seek to relate the various aspects of her argument to one another. She hammers home her points with verbatim repetitions: *ahaṃ Rāmam anuvratā*, 'I am wholly devoted to Rāma' (*Rām.* 3.45.29d=30d=31d); *tad antaraṃ Dāśarathes tava͡eva ca*: 'that is the distance between Dasaratha's son and you' (*Rām.* 3.45.40d=41d=42d). Moreover, Sītā constructs lists differently than Odysseus does. In her speech, elements of a list are related to one another only on the smallest of levels, the level of two or three units found side by side—precisely where Odysseus's list displays random juxtaposition. As Sītā proceeds, all relations are swept aside in the swollen onrush of a single theme:

> You wish to seize a fang from the mouth of a viper.
>
> You wish to carry Mandara, best of mountains, in your hand.
> You wish to continue in prosperity after drinking the poison Kalakuta.
>
> You wipe your eye with a needle; you lick a razor with your tongue.
> You wish to carry off the beloved wife of Rāghava.
>
> *Rām.* 3.45.34c–36

The total organization of the speech suffers as a result, but it suffers only from a Greek point of view. Sītā does not try to present an organic speech—

a speech in which all the parts constitute an economical, functional whole—but to state and to repeat each 'spurt' of power as forcefully and as concisely as possible, to distill it, we might say, to its quintessential if manifest form. She treats us to three major assertions in succession: her devotion to Rāma, the impossibility of Rāvaṇa's desire, and the difference between Rāma and Rāvaṇa. Likewise, Sītā's arguments do not invoke relations that constitute power, nor does she offer to increase (or, conversely, threaten to decrease) Rāvaṇa's standing in the economics of status. Here and elsewhere, Sītā argues instead from the inherent character of the individual (his or her *bhāva*) and from the inherent nature of the act (*dharma*, *adharma*). Later she even threatens to reduce her captor to ash! (*Rām.* 5.20.20)

PERSUADING THE MANY

The contrast with Vālmīki shows that there is nothing 'natural' or 'universal' about the form of the power and practice of persuasion in Homer. Now we may ask: why is it that the *agorē*, in which these activities occur, is juxtaposed with *themis* and the altars at the centre of the Achaian camp?

Themis is particularly difficult to assess. On the one hand, it is not so much an activity or a place as a body of principles or customs, the collected patterns that govern all proper activity. Thus, through his envoy Odysseus, Agamemnon promises to return Briseis with an oath

> that he never entered into her bed and never lay with her,
> as is natural (*themis*) for human people, between men and women.
> *Iliad* 9.275–276

The customary patterns of *themis* include both the activities of the assembly and activities at the altar. When the Achaian heroes, gripped by panic, assemble in the middle of a sleepless night, Agamemnon stands before them, weeping like a black-watered spring. Silence follows Agamemnon's pitiful speech, silence that Diomedes finally breaks:

> Son of Atreus: I will be first to fight with your folly,
> as is . . . right (*themis*), lord, in the assembly (*agorēi*).
> *Iliad* 9.32–33 (translation slightly altered)

Similarly, when Telemachos arrives at Pylos with divine assistance, the son of Nestor bids the disguised Athena to pour a libation and pray to Poseidon as is *themis* (*Od.* 3.45).

But on the other hand, *themis* has a more specific sense, and it is this sense that most commentators associate with the constellation at the centre of camp. *Themis* in this sense makes an appearance as Odysseus recites Agamemnon's promises:

> He will grant you seven citadels, strongly settled
>
> men live among them rich in cattle and rich in sheepflocks
> who will honour you as if you were a god with gifts given
> and fulfill your prospering decrees (*themistas*) underneath your sceptre.
> *Iliad* 9.291, 296–298

Perhaps the translation 'decrees' prejudices the issue a little, for it is not certain how the *themistes* (plural of *themis*) come into being. The pertinent point for us is that the sceptre-bearing kings have the task of overseeing *themis* as a trust from Zeus (*Iliad* 1.237–239, 2.205–206, 9.98–99). Stationed next to the altars and the assembly, *themis* would seem to refer to the means by which the best men of the Achaians adjudicate. Indeed, when adjudication is localized at all, it is placed in the *agorē* (cp. *Iliad* 16.386–388, 18.497–508).

Homer does not depict any adjudicatory procedures clearly. His attention is drawn to the dispute between the heroes, so that for him 'the people' are only so much cannon-fodder. But the *Iliad* does contain an extended simile that refers to judges who pervert the *themistes* by violence in the *agorē*; they receive their rewards from Zeus who sees in heaven (*Iliad* 16.386–388). Achilles's shield, too, shows a dispute over a bloodprice in the *agorē*; the disputing parties appeal for judgment to the old men who sit on benches (*Iliad* 18.497–508). But even apart from the dearth of details in these passages, neither of the incidents that they report occurs in the world of the heroes, and thus neither elucidates the activities at the centre of the Achaian camp.

What glimpses Homer does give us of the *aristoi* overseeing *themis* are none too refined. When Agamemnon's ill-considered strategy rallies his troops to romp for home, Odysseus saves the day:

> Whenever he encountered some king, or man of influence (*exochon andra*),
> he would stand behind him and with soft words try to restrain him.
>
> [But] when he saw some man of the people (*andra dēmou*) who was shouting,.
> he would strike at him with his staff [*skēptron*, sceptre], and reprove him.
> *Iliad* 2.188–189, 198–199

After Odysseus restores a semblance of order, Thersites, the ugliest man who came to Troy (*Iliad* 2.216), continues to stir up trouble. With harsh words, Odysseus takes the sceptre—the God-given mark of both the *themistes* and the right to speak in assembly (cp. *Iliad* 1.225–244)—and strikes Thersites a blow across the back, raising a bloody welt and a flood of tears.

With such a scarcity of material, it is difficult to formulate precise conclusions that relate *themis* to the practice of verbal craft, but we can make two observations.

First, social stratification would seem to be responsible for the differentiation of *agorē* and *themis* at the centre of camp. The troops assembled on the banks of Troy fall into two broad classes, the heroes, or *aristoi*, and the masses of soldiers. Odysseus's action in halting the rout clearly marks the different treatment that these groups merit.

The *aristoi* constitute a group of relative equals bound together by mutual self-interest. In the dealings of *aristoi* with *aristoi*, *erga*—deeds of violence—are proscribed, except in the ritual setting of the games (*philoi* fight with words: cp. *Iliad* 1.304, 9.32–34). Such deeds would amount to a declaration of war, for they threaten to deprive a hero of his status (cp. Eumaios in *Od.* 14) or even of his life. The same loss of status would result should one *aristos* try to dictate to another, that is, to adjudicate (cp. the dispute between Achilles and Agamemnon). Odysseus must speak gently to men of influence, and the common actions of great men must he conducted through persuasion, with words and, if necessary, with gifts (cp. *Iliad* 9.112–113).

But the *aristoi* and the masses are of unequal status; one mark of the inequality is that the *aristoi* are entrusted with overseeing the *themistes* for society as a whole. This inequality governs the means of adjudication, that is, the activity that *themis* connotes. Antilochos or Agamemnon would never brook a blow on the back with the sceptre, even from an Achilles, but between unequals words are harsh and deeds produce not gifts but violence when it comes time to reinstate the normal workings of *themis*, when it comes time, that is, to persuade.

Second, *themis* as a principle is intimately related to the power of persuasion. We have already seen that arguments and other persuasional devices are grounded in relationships. That is, we have seen that rhetorical operations attempt to actualize and to reapply the power that is latent in ordinary social interactions. It is precisely this latent power to which *themis* gives voice or shape, for as a custom or principle, *themis* identifies the social interactions that count as ordinary. *Themis* describes the behavior that results when the latent 'power of persuasion' operates undisturbed. 'So spoke Achilles, and Patroklos "obeyed" [literally, "was persuaded by"] his beloved companion' (*Iliad* 1.345=9.205=11.616)—as was *themis* or customary, Homer might have added.

Thus, verbal craft attempts to utilize the power of persuasion in actuality; *themis* as a principle describes that same power in potentiality. Successful persuasion results in particular acts; *themis* governs patterns of behavior—patterns that we may call 'obedience', but that Homer calls 'being persuaded' (*peithesthai*, passive of *peithein*, 'to persuade'). Appropriately, Themis the goddess, an active force rather than a general description, performs two tasks in the *Iliad*. She summons the gods to the divine *agorē* and thus constitutes the divine society in action (*Iliad* 20.4); and she presides over the fair division of the feast, the preeminent sign of social harmony (*Iliad* 15.95).[11]

PERSUADING THE GODS

If you hate Agamemnon, Odysseus pleads with Achilles,

> . . . at least take pity on all the other
> Achaians, who are afflicted along the host, and they will honour you
> as a god.
>
> *Iliad* 9.301–303 (translation slightly altered)

The kings hold the *themistes* as a trust from Zeus. The altars to the gods border upon the places of political assembly and adjudication. For the Achaian community to flourish, acts directed to the gods—I shall call them 'religious acts'[12]—must supplement *themis* and verbal craft. The power of *themis*—the power of persuasion—is also religious power.

Ordinary acts directed to the gods belong to the realm of *themis*. Sacrifices, offerings, prayers, and oaths drone *sotto voce* in the background of Homer's narrative. Like most drones, they receive little of the artist's attention. Performed regularly, but unobtrusively, these acts establish and maintain relations with the gods—social relations. Of the Trojans, Hektor is most dear (*philtatos*) to the gods, for, as Zeus himself explains, 'he never failed of gifts to my liking' (*Iliad* 24.68). Through regular observances, human beings make the gods *philoi*. If they were mortal, we would call them 'friends'.

But Homer does not simply allow sacrifices and offerings to drone. His poetic instincts gravitate toward the dilemmas posed by the violation of *themis* rather than the continued subsistence of ordinary patterns. In unusual circumstances, heroes find it incumbent to direct special activities to the gods: to actualize and to redirect the power latent in ordinary religious observances. The situation at the opening of the *Iliad* is an ideal example. The Achaians wonder what fault has brought upon them the wrath of Apollo and the ensuing plague. Kalchas, the augur, points to the cause: Agamemnon has dishonoured Apollo's priest. The augur urges the Achaians to return the daughter of Chryses and to sacrifice a hecatomb to Apollo, for, he says, 'propitiating [the god], we might persuade (*pepithoimen*) him' (*Iliad* 1.100, my trans.; cp. *Iliad* 12.173).

Kalchas's language is pointed. Ordinarily, gods and humans interact in a harmonious social union, but occasionally the gods, like Achilles, refuse to participate in the commonly recognized patterns, for whatever reasons. In such cases, mortals must take recourse to familiar persuasional means: they must approach the gods at the altars with words and with gifts (cp. *Iliad* 9.499–501). As a result, in the *Iliad* the religous act is a cousin to human verbal craft.[13] The family traits are unmistakable. They govern the extent over which and the manner in which these acts work.

In the *Iliad*, religious acts are always social. They always address the gods as personal beings. Zeus is never lightning or rain or hail; he controls them (cp. *Iliad* 10.5–8). They invariably address these beings in a personal manner, most often by offering them food and gifts and haranguing them with speeches. And they hope to elicit from the gods appropriate personal responses.

Religious acts are also 'relational'. They do not of themselves create or destroy (contrast, for example, Indrajit's sacrifice in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which would, if successful, render him absolutely invincible *ex opere operata*). Regular sacrifices and libations both make the gods *philoi* and maintain harmony among mortals, for in the sacrifice, Homer states repeatedly, 'no one's *thumos* lacks an appropriate portion' (*Iliad* 1.468 and elsewhere). In cases of extraordinary need, such as the plague or the reconciliation of warring *aristoi*, sacrifices serve to reestablish the social harmony that they ordinarily reinforce, among mortals as well as between mortals and the gods.

If in extent religious acts in the *Iliad* are social and relational, their manner of working is systemic and economical. They only invoke the first and, in Homer's social view, the necessarily personal elements in complex systems of cause and effect. Religious acts do not make heroes invincible as a part of their personal endowment of being. They persuade the god to relent from shooting invisible shafts tipped with the plague or to render a hero impregnable by providing him with exceedingly fine armor.

A power that operates through a weblike system does not invite repetition. The economical nature of the *Iliad*'s religious activities appears everywhere. To invoke the Sanskrit comparison briefly once again: a *mantra*, like the refrains in Sītā's speech, gains force through repetition, but Homer's prayers exhibit the same economy as his speeches. This is not to say that acts which heroes direct to the gods always lack grandeur. A hecatomb is, after all, a massive slaughter. But once performed, it is not necessary to repeat the slaughter for the same need.

The economical nature of religious activity in the *Iliad* extends even to the activities of the gods. Vālmīki's omens—natural occurrences more often than messages from the gods—revel in what would seem superfluous expenditure to one of Homer's Greeks. Monstrous clouds rain blood; draught animals weep; banners fall; vultures squawk hideously; misshapen women laugh deridingly; dogs devour offerings; donkeys and cows, mice and mongooses, cats and leopards, pigs and dogs miscegenate, and still the portents in even a single list are not exhausted (*Rām*. 6.23.22–27). In the *Iliad*, one sign, perhaps narrated in some detail, is sufficient.

> [Agamemnon] spoke thus, and as he wept the father took pity upon him
> and bent his head, that the people should stay alive, and not perish.
> Straightaway he sent down the most lordly of birds, an eagle,
> with a fawn, the young of the running deer, caught in his talons,
> who cast down the fawn beside Zeus's splendid altar
> where the Achaians wrought their devotions to Zeus of the Voices.

> They, when they saw the bird and knew it was Zeus who sent it,
> remembered once again their warcraft, and turned on the Trojans.
>
> *Iliad* 8.245–252

In the *Iliad*, acts directed to the gods at the altars engage a power that is social, systemic, relational, and economical. The same traits characterize the power of speeches in the *agorē*. The correlation is not accidental. Like rhetorical acts, religious acts attempt to persuade. Religious acts and verbal craft are two means by which Homer's heroes maintain and, in cases of need, seek to reactualize the same power: the power of persuasion that resides in ordinary social relations and interactions. In a metaphorical sense, this power is central to the Homeric community: successful persuasion ensures the harmonious interaction that is essential for social flourishing. Literally, this power is localized at the centre of the Achaian camp. It is responsible for the characteristics of that centre, both negative and positive.

On the negative side, the Achaian centre distinctly lacks cosmological symbolism, for the power of this centre is a social power. Even Homer's gods—those beings who possess this power to the greatest extent—have no cosmogonic and little cosmological significance. Their greater abilities do place certain natural forces under their control, but they simply manipulate these forces the way a mortal manipulates tools—and for similar ends. Zeus, for example, has power over the lightning and rain, but he does not use that power to fructify the world of nature. He uses it to communicate across the vast distance that separates heaven from earth and to frustrate—like Odysseus with the sceptre—the efforts of those who would confound *themis* by force (cp. *Iliad* 16.386–388).

As a result, the centre of the Achaian camp is not 'cosmological' but 'anthropological.' I do not mean that it is 'anthropological' in the sense that J. Z. Smith reveals to us with such acumen for the later Greco-Roman world. Smith identifies a process of 'anthropologization' that involves a break with a localized centre (diaspora), a focus on the individual rather than on the community, and the location of various cosmological powers in certain privileged persons (the magical abilities of the 'divine man'). In the *Iliad*—and in significant elements of the old Greek religion—we find just the reverse. The Achaian religion remains 'locative' and communal in character, but religious powers do not transform nature and being so much as they govern social processes.[14]

Thus, flourishing in the Achaian community does not require a synchronism between human cycles and rhythms on the one hand, and the patterns of the cosmos on the other. The Achaian community flourishes when persuasion is exercised to maintain and reestablish social harmony and order. The centre of the camp provides a public location at which communally significant persuasion can occur.

The centre of the camp cannot, however, be a simple, undifferentiated expanse, for the systems of relations in which the power of persuasion resides and operates is distinctly hierarchical. In Homer, those mortals who possess the greatest amount of communal power—the 'god-like' *aristoi*—have the privilege of exercising that power for the benefit of all. The structures of the centre are ordered accordingly. The *aristoi* must direct the power of persuasion to three distinct groups: fellow *aristoi*, those who cannot aspire to the status of 'the best' (the people), and those whose *aretē* (excellence), *biē* (strength), and *timē* (material 'honour') surpass the capabilities of any mortal (*Iliad* 9.498). Where they do so publicly, one finds the *agorē*, *themis*, and the altars of the gods.

SETTING AND PLOT

I have stopped Homer in midcourse. Let us set the narrative in motion again. Patroklos, too, is detained momentarily, but in the end he remembers why he had been running from Nestor's hut. Patroklos's mission is to try to persuade, 'for the persuasion of a friend is a strong thing' (*Iliad* 15.404). Patroklos must try to actualize the power of persuasion. He must try to extend the power of the centre to Achilles, who sits sulking, removed from communal activity, at the edge of the camp.

The power of persuasion is central not only to the setting of the *Iliad* but to its plot as well. Homer sings of a wrath that threatens to destroy a society established upon the power of persuasion by making persuasion impossible (cp. *Iliad* 1.1–2). Achilles taunts repeatedly, 'You will not persuade *me*'. But the *Iliad* is in some sense a religious epic. In the end, the gods, who surpass all mortals in excellence, strength, and honour, successfully parry Achilles's threat. 'So be it, . . . if the Olympian himself so earnestly bids it' (*Iliad* 24.139–140; translation altered).

In depicting the power and the failure of human persuasion—and the power and persuasion of the gods—the *Iliad* addresses a problematic that is of central importance to Greek society, in Athens as on the banks of Troy. In doing so, the *Iliad* appropriates the centre for itself. It makes of its author the central practitioner of Greek poetic craft, and it establishes itself as the central, sacred text of the religion of the Greek *polis*.

NOTES

1 Except where noted, translations of the *Iliad* are by Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); line references are to the Oxford Classical Text edition (D. B. Munro and T. W. Allen, eds). References to the *Rāmāyaṇa* are to the text of the Baroda critical edition (7 vols, India: Baroda, 1960–74). The welcome translation of this edition under the direction of R. Goldman is only in the initial stages of publication. As a result, all translations from Sanskrit are my own.

Thanks are due especially to Larry Alderink, Luther Martin, and two anonymous reviewers for helpful suggestions on previous versions of this article.

2 Homer is by no means consistent in identifying the location of the assembly or the centre of the Achaian camp. In what follows, I do not intend to elucidate *the* geography of the *Iliad* so much as a particular collocation of elements that are instructive for the Greek attitude toward communal centres. The place to which Patroklos comes is not specifically identified as the camp's centre, but in *Iliad* 8.222–226, Homer places the ships of Odysseus at the midpoint. Cp. W. A. McDonald, *Political Meeting Places of the Greeks* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1943), pp. 20–36, esp. pp. 23–24.

3 Perhaps the mere mention of the number three, and the comparison with Indian epic that I develop later, is enough to recall the works of G. Dumézil. Indeed, some readers of an earlier version of this paper queried why I did not include the ships of Odysseus among the accoutrements of the centre and interpet the various central elements in terms of Dumézil's tripartite ideology. Such a move is undesirable on several counts. (1) Ships *per se* are hardly distinctive of the centre of camp; the entire beachhead consists of a string of ships accompanied by huts, strung—according to one scenario—from those of the Telamonian Ajax to those of Achilles (*Iliad* 8.222–226). The ships of Odysseus contribute nothing to the central group; they merely serve to mark the location. (2) The ship is not an instrument of war in Homer. It is simply a vehicle which may carry warriors to a distant destination, but which may also carry persons on missions of peace, as it carries Telemachos to Pylos (*Od.* 3). (3) A stylized instrument of war at the centre of the Achaian camp would violate a division of activities fundamental to Homer between *erga* and *polemos* (deeds of violence and war) on the one hand, and *epea* and *boulē* (words of counsel) on the other. This division corresponds neatly to the distinction between centre and periphery. Homer locates the ships of the quick-minded Odysseus in the centre of camp (cp. his concilatory role in *Iliad* 19), and those of the most powerful offensive and defensive warriors, Achilles and Ajax, on the boundary that marks the transition to the realm of battle.

The invocation of Dumézil is understandable, given the high visibility of his theories, but we ought to resist the insidious temptation to reduce Dumézil's thought to some magical 'cookie-cutter' from which we continue to press tripartite tidbits, disregarding the distinctive traits of the cultures from which we extract our materials. Despite the valiant efforts of scholars such as C. S. Littleton and U. Strytinski, the 'Greek miracle' still evades a persuasive, far-reaching application of Dumézil's model. What is first needed, in my opinion, is a fuller appreciation of the structural differences between the various cultural descendants of the Indo-Europeans. In the discussion that follows, I pursue such differences in order to elucidate the *Iliad*, and I eschew any concern for reconstructing Indo-European prototyes.

4 The Greek *agora* (Homeric *agorē*), often mistranslated 'marketplace', was a place for both informal gathering and formal assembly, and as such a place where judicial and religious activity also occurred. On the Athenian agora, see especially: H. A. Thompson and R. E. Wycherley, *The Agora of Athens: The History, Shape, and Uses of an Ancient City Center*, Vol. 14 of *The Athenian Agora* (Princeton, NJ: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1972); R. E. Wycherley, *The Stones of Athens* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 27–90; and John Travlos, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), s.v. *agora*.

An old legend juxtaposes the same three elements—political, judicial, and religious—in functionally specialized places. At one time, it says, Athens had an old agora in the low-lying land between the Acropolis and the Areopagus; see Thompson and Wycherley, p. 79; Travlos, pp. 1–2; and J. N. Coldstream, *Geometric Greece* (New York: St Martin's, 1977), p. 315. To the best of my knowledge, archaeology has never verified this legend. There are, however, intriguing configurations that juxtapose these same elements in remains that were built about the time when most scholars see the Homeric epics coming into existence, the 'Greek Renaissance' of the 8th century. See, for example, John Boardman, *Excavations in Chios, 1952–1955: Greek Emporio*, British School of Archaeology at Athens, Supplementary Volume 6 (Oxford, 1967).

5 Almost any statement about Homer is capable of evoking reams of bibliographical reference and storms of protest. In the activities of the Achaian encampment, none of the heroes seems capable of exerting the prerogatives of kingship. Cp. O. T. P. K. Dickinson, Homer, The Poet of the Dark Age, *Greece and Rome*, second series **33** (1986) 20–37, who writes: 'It is not clear to me that Homer understands kingship at all; much of the time, his references suit better an aristocratic society, in which the heads of noble houses wield power in federation' (pp. 32–34); see further, Ian Morris, The Use and Abuse of Homer, *Classical Antiquity* **5** (1986) 81–138, 98–99.

Among Eliade's many statements on centres, see especially *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (R. Sheed trans.), (New York: New American Library, 1963), Chap. 10, Sacred Places: Temple, Palace, Centre of the World, pp. 367–387. P. Wheatley explores the communal centres of Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus valley, ancient China, Nigeria, the Peruvian highlands, and Mesoamerica at great length in *The Pivot of the Four Quarters: A Preliminary Enquiry into the Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City* (Chicago: Aldine, 1971), especially pp. 305–330, 411–451.

For Smith's views, see his *Map is not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), especially pp. 186–189.

6 Cp. *Iliad* 1.258, 490–491; 2.202, 273; 3.150; 4.400; 9.374, 440–441; 12.213–214; 18.106, 252. The precise reference of '*agorē*' is unclear. Some scholars wish to make the *agorē* the assembly of all the Achaians (the *laos* or *dēmos*); they then reserve the term *boulē* for the private meetings of the *aristoi*. For one recent example, see C. G. Starr, *Individual and Community: The Rise of the Polis 800–500 B.C.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 19–21. Homer himself seems to undercut any such attempts at precision: cp. *Iliad* 9.33 and 54, where the same gathering is both *agorē* and *boulē*. My concern here is not to identify precise forms—the centuries-long genesis of the Greek epic tradition makes any precision about political forms somewhat dubious—but rather the structures of power that remain constant within the variety.

7 Epic Persuasion: Religion and Rhetoric in the *Iliad* and Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, March 1986, pp. 40–90.

The reader who knows the *Iliad* will recognize that Odysseus's speech is set not at the centre of camp but on its periphery, among the ships of Achilles. The setting echoes the threat implied in Achilles's refusal to participate in the joint ventures of the Achaians. The embassy represents an attempt to convey the persuasion of the centre—the words spoken by Agamemnon in the assembly—to the periphery, but he fails: a nice nuance, but a nuance that is not significant here.

8 The effect centres on the identical metrical placement of the nearly homonymous antonyms, *achos* (grief, affliction), and *akos* (remedy). Phonetic similarity is confined to the neighborhood of the virtual homonyms: both are preceded by a syllable containing a short, front vowel followed by a sibilant and a dental, aspirated where the following guttural is aspirated, non-aspirated where the following guttural is not aspirated. In both lines, elision bridges the penthemimeral caesura, the lost vowels completing an e–i pair with the vowel in the preceding syllable. Both near homonyms are followed by a verb that begins with epsilon (one in a diphthong), but now aspiration is reversed. *Ch* is followed by a smooth breathing, *k* by a rough breathing. Colometrically, the lines are identical: trithemimeral and penthemimeral caesurae and bucolic diaereseis. Both phrases after the diaereseis are enjambed quite necessarily, and both begin new clauses. The only metrical difference is in the fourth foot: the verb in the first line is dactylic, in the second, spondaic.

9 On ring-composition as a fundamental constituent of Homer's speeches, see especially Dieter Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden in der Ilias* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970).

10 There is considerable speculation that the Greek and the Sanskrit epic traditions derive from the same source. See especially Gregory Nagy, *Comparative Studies in Greek and Indic Meter* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974). I find the results to date somewhat inconclusive. My comparison requires not that the two epics be genetically related, but only that they be composed in formally similar ways.

R. Söhnen has examined speeches in the *Vālmīki-Rāmāyaṇa* extensively, but she uses a different text of the poem that I do and asks somewhat different questions; see her *Untersuchungen zur Komposition von Reden und Gesprächen im Rāmāyaṇa*, 2 Vols, Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik, Monograph 6 (Reinbek: Verlag für orientalistischen Fachpublikationen, 1979). R. Goldman provides a helpful general listing of contrasts between Homer and Vālmīki in his introduction to *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India*, Vol. 1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 97–106.

11 Vālmīki's *dharma*—the threat to which provides the central plot of the *Rāmāyaṇa*—contrasts markedly with Homeric *themis*, and along lines that we would expect. A couple of notes here will have to suffice.

As Homer's vocabulary indicates, *themis* is the power of persuasion incarnate; but Vālmīki—indeed, the Sanskrit language—has no distinct word for 'persuasion'. *Dharma* is the structure of being whose power of inevitable actualization persuasion—a lesser form of 'speech'—tries to match. Thus, *themis* governs the actions and relations of personal beings; *dharma* defines the structures that become the entire cosmos.

In more practical terms, *themis* operates in a universe concerned with the maximization of social pleasure and flourishing; Achilles, like all Achaian heroes, wants his share of *timē*. *Dharma* adopts a different operative principle that is concerned not with socially recognizable pleasure but with the manifestations of one's true, inner nature, a principle I call *asukhatva* ('non-pleasure-ness'): the option that least threatens to confound *dharma* with *sukha*, personal pleasure, is preferred; indeed, it most fosters universal flourishing.

The most vivid illustration of this difference is given when Odysseus and Rāma sustain *themis* and *dharma* in the face of the ugly. Odysseus whacks Thersites over the back with the sceptre to uphold *themis*. When the humpback maid suggests her hideous plot to Rāma's stepmother Kaikeyī and the latter decides to act on it. Rāma's father Daśaratha swoons and then dies, his mothers and brothers and the entire realm entreat him to remain in Ayodhyā and take the reins of the kingdom, but Rāma is not in the least deterred. Wholly devoted to *dharma*, he renounces the social and retires to the uninhabited forest—a mirror image of Achilles perhaps, but an image in which anti-social retreat is not negative and disruptive but positive and generative.

12 I. Morris writes, 'Homer's gods have long been recognized as curiously un-numinous . . . and very different from the gods elsewhere in Greek literature' (n. 3, p. 125). Those who like their gods numinous—and those who approach Homer with a notion of 'religion' informed primarily by the Western monotheistic traditions or the 'great Asian religions'—may find my use of 'religion' curious. I am not convinced that Homer's gods, 'un-numinous' though they may be, are simply literary inventions and not 'real gods'. I concede, however, that I am in a distinct minority, and it would take an entire article to argue the point. Those who favour 'literary gods' may take 'religion' as my abbreviated term for the relations between mortals and the gods, along with actions directed from mortals to the gods, within the world that Homer portrays. The way that these actions differ from religious acts familiar in India or, indeed, in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, is central to the point I am making.

For a brief and balanced discussion of the place of Homer in Greek religion, see W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (J. Raffan, trans.), (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 119–125.

13 R. Mondi notes: 'Emile Benveniste has observed that the language describing the interaction between man and his king in the Homeric poems is often the same as that expressing the relationship between man and god' ('*Skēptouchoi Basileis*: An Argument for Divine Kingship in Early Greece', *Arethusa* 13 [1980], p. 205). I have not had access to the French edition Mondi cites, and I have been unable to locate the appropriate reference to Benveniste in the English translation.

14 Apparently Smith draws the contrast he does for two reasons, both entirely justified: (1) Smith is concerned primarily with the *non*-Greek precursors of the Hellenistic period, and above all with ancient Judaism; (2) the two modes of religiosity that Smith defines also express the two modes of the contemporary Jewish experience, as Smith himself recognizes (pp. 104–107). If the constellation that I have outlined for Homer is correct, we may need to supplement Smith's image of Hellenization. But in doing so, a couple of points should be kept in mind. (1) Various other strands contributed to the central religion of old Greece (see Burkert, note 13 above), of which we find indications even in Homer; see the fascinating comments on the city as virgin (goddess) in Stephen Scully, The Polis in Homer: A Definition and Interpretation, *Ramus: Critical Studies in Greek and Latin Literature (Australia)* **10** (1981) 1–34. (2) Throughout archaic and classical Greece, several peripheral groups (ascetics, ecstatics, women) contributed to the fabric of religion configurations of power, space, and ritual different from those that I have explored in the *Iliad*.

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Erratum

The Hermeneutics of Visionary Experience: Revelation and Interpretation in the *Zohar*
Elliot R. Wolfson

Religion (1988) 18, 311–345

Page 337, Note 36, line 3 should read "Cf. H. Davidson, "The Active Intellect in the Cuzari and Hallevi's Theory of Causality," *Revue des Études Juives* 131 (1972): 385, who writes that the 'spiritual vision' in prophecy for Hallevi, unlike Alfarabi [see below], has an objective existence."

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THE HERMENEUTICS OF VISIONARY EXPERIENCE: REVELATION AND INTERPRETATION IN THE *ZOHAR*

Elliot R. Wolfson

This paper analyses the processes of revelation and interpretation as they function in the classic work of medeival Jewish mysticism, the *Zohar*. The author points out that visionary experience of the divine is not only central to Zoharic theosophy, but that the act of textual study itself must be understood in the light of this phenomenon insofar as the text is nothing but the configuration of divine light. The author demonstrates that the phenomenological structure of these two modes is identical according to the *Zohar*. Hence, the kabbalist who interprets Scripture attains the level of Moses who received the Torah at Sinai.

INTRODUCTION

The legitimization of new insights within the history of Judaism, as other religious cultures based on sacred scriptures, has basically taken one of two forms: exegesis of the foundational documents or appeal to direct revelation. That is, a newly expressed truth is either attributed to a divinely inspired revelation or is found to be implicit in the ancient text and derived therefrom exegetically. To be sure, in both of these possibilities the link with past tradition is secured. The one who claims that he has had a new vision will not only express that disclosure in traditional language but will attribute the experience to a traditional authority. Thus, taking an example from the history of Jewish mysticism, in the chain of transmission of mystical lore associated with the first known kabbalists in Provence, Abraham ben Isaac, Abraham ben David, Jacob ha-Nazir and Isaac the Blind, esoteric knowledge was said to be imparted through the revelation of the prophet Elijah.[1] The name of the latter alone at least partially guaranteed the legitimacy of the revelation in traditional circles. Whatever the content of the mystical revelation, its being attributed to Elijah, the guardian of rabbinic tradition *par excellence*, secured its place within normative Judaism. In the case of a novel interpretation, this process of legitimization is all the more certain as new ideas are presented as part of the original revelation. The potential gap separating the scriptural revelation and ongoing human interpretation is

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effectively closed by the hermeneutical assumption, – which some might call a "noble fiction",[2] – that all truth is contained in the sacred text. Again turning to Judaism for an example, scholars have long noted the fundamental paradox characterizing scriptural interpretation, *midrash*, in the rabbinic tradition: whatever is new must be old for all interpretations are presumed to have been hidden in the Torah.[3]

It is sometimes assumed by scholars of Jewish thought that the modalities of revelation and interpretation are mutually exclusive. An appeal to exegesis thus arises specifically in a situation wherein access to divine revelation has ceased, for were such a revelation forthcoming there would be no need to derive truths out of a fixed canon. *Midrash*, in a word, presupposes a distance from God due to the cessation of prophetic or revelatory states.[4] Yet, it can be shown that within the Judaic tradition, particularly in the apocalyptic and mystical literature,[5] there is an intrinsic connection between the study of a text and visionary experience. Far from being mutually exclusive, the visionary experience itself may be interpretative in nature, drawing upon prior visions recorded in a written document, while the exegetical task may originate and eventuate in a revelatory state of consciousness.

The purpose of this study is to examine the question of the relation between revelation and interpretation in the *Zohar*, the classic text of medieval Jewish mysticism which surfaced in Castile towards the end of the 13th century. As Gershom Scholem has argued, historical documents attest to the fact that in the 12th century two distinct modes of legitimization of mystical doctrine were operative in kabbalistic circles: one, which I have already mentioned, consisted of the mystical revelations of Elijah, and the other mystical *midrash*, particularly as is evidenced in the case of the *Sefer ha-Bahir*.[6] Elsewhere Scholem has written that in the history of Kabbalah, innovations were made 'on the basis of new interpretations of ancient lore' as well as 'a result of fresh inspiration or revelation, or even of a dream'.[7] Kabbalistic literature, according to Scholem, is thus coloured by a duality between supernatural illumination, on the one hand, and traditional exegesis, on the other. The thesis of this paper, simply stated, is that in the *Zohar* the two modes, revelation and interpretation, are identified and blended together. That this convergence occurs is due to the fact that the underlying theosophic structure provides a phenomenological basis common to both. In the hermeneutic relation which the mystic exegete has to the text he is once again seeing God as God was seen in the historic event of revelation. In short, from the vantage point of the *Zohar*, visionary experience is a vehicle for hermeneutics as hermeneutics is a vehicle for visionary experience. The combining of these modalities was a potent force that had a profound influence upon subsequent generations of Jewish exegetes. The nexus between textual study and visionary experience having been established, interpretation of Scripture was no longer viewed as simply fulfilling God's ultimate command, to study Torah (*talmud Torah*), but was rather understood as an act of participating in the very drama of divine life. *Interpretatio* itself became a moment of *revelatio*, which, in the language of the *Zohar*, further involves the process of *devequt*, i.e. the cleaving of the individual to God.[8]

REVELATION

To grasp the correlation of interpretative and revelatory modes in the *Zohar*, it is necessary to analyse each component of the equation separately. The first question then concerns the Zoharic understanding of revelation. Scattered throughout the voluminous corpus of the *Zohar* are many valuable, at times contradictory[9] insights concerning the nature of revelation. For the purposes of this paper, however, the focus will be specifically on the Zoharic treatment of the nature of the visionary experience of the Sinaitic theophany.

In one of the key texts,[10] an interpretation of Ex. 20:15, 'And all the people saw the voices,' *we-khol ha-'am ro'im 'et ha-qolot*, the *Zohar* raises an obvious problem which troubled classical and medieval exegetes[11] alike: why does Scripture employ the predicate 'saw' in conjunction with the object 'voices' thereby mixing an optical and auditory metaphor? In response to this query, the *Zohar* offers three possible interpretations. The first, attributed to R. Abba, is based on a more or less literal, close reading of Scripture and suggests that the incorporeal voices of divine speech were embodied in the physical media of darkness, cloud, and thick fog,[12] which allowed them to be seen by the human eye. From such a vision the Israelites were illuminated by the supernal light of God. The second view, attributed to R. Jose, maintains that these voices, the content of the vision, were nothing other than the *sefirot* themselves, the potencies of God, which shone forth.[13] It thus makes perfect sense to speak of an 'actual seeing' of these voices for the latter are in essence of a luminous nature. A third view, attributed to R. Eleazar, offers yet another, though not unrelated, interpretation. According to him, the voices likewise refer to the *sefirot* but the vision of these voices was mediated through the last of them, the *Shekhinah*.[14] This is alluded to in the verse by the accusative particle, *'et*, which functions in the *Zohar* as a mystical symbol for the last gradation, the completion of divine speech, inasmuch as this word comprises the first and last consonants of the Hebrew alphabet.[15]

R. Eleazar's interpretation that at Sinai Israel had a vision of *Shekhinah* has its antecedents in a host of midrashic and aggadic statements which emphasise the unique theophanous quality of the Sinaitic revelation.[16] In terms of kabbalistic precedents, the notion that *Shekhinah* is the locus of the revelatory experience at Sinai is first expressed in the *Sefer ha-Bahir*.

> One verse says, 'And all the people saw the voices' (Exod. 20:15), and another verse says, 'The voice of the words which you heard' (Deut. 4:12). How is this possible? At first they saw the voices. And what did they see? The seven voices . . . and in the end they heard the speech that went out from them all. We have learned that there were ten [words] and the rabbis said that all of them were said in one word.[17] So all of these [seven voices] were said in one word.[18]

Just as the rabbis had claimed that the ten words of revelation were uttered in one, so too the seven voices, which correspond to the seven lower of the ten *sefirot*, are all contained in one speech, i.e. the *Shekhinah*. That the one word which contains all the upper voices refers to *Shekhinah* may be gathered from the following section of the *Bahir* which states: 'Ten words [correspond] to the ten kings . . . the word "I" (*'anokhi*) is written amongst them [cf. Exod. 20:2] and it contains all ten.'[19] *Shekhinah* is symbolised by the first person pronoun, *'anokhi*, for the feminine Presence is the subjective pole of the divine pleroma, the aspect which addresses man as the 'I' of the voice of revelation.

That which was implied in the enigmatic passage from the *Bahir* is developed further by 13th century Spanish Kabbalists, such as R. Ezra of Gerona and his younger colleague, Naḥmanides (1194–1270). Thus, for example, in one place R. Ezra comments that although there are two aspects of Torah, written and oral, which correspond respectively to the sixth (masculine) and tenth (feminine) divine emanations,[20] the medium of revelation of the former is the latter. 'The oral Torah [*Shekhinah*] emanates from the written Torah [*Tif'eret*] which maintains Her . . . The two *torot* were given by means of the *Shekhinah* . . . for the inner voice [of revelation] was not discernible or heard until the end which is the tenth *sefirah*.[21] Nahmanides, for his part, writes in his commentary to Exodus 19:20:

> [The Torah] was given to Moses in seven voices[22] [i.e. the seven *sefirot*], which he heard and comprehended. But with respect to Israel, they heard it in one voice [i.e. *Shekhinah*], as it says, 'a loud voice and no more' (Deut. 5:19). And it says, 'You heard the sound of words but perceived no shape—nothing but a [single] voice' (ibid. 4:12). And here too [Scripture] alludes [to this]: 'And all the people saw the voices' (Exod. 20:15), the word *qolot* is [written] without a *waw* [signifying the plural form], for they [Israel] saw all the voices as one [viz., *Shekhinah*].[23]

The opinion attributed in the *Zohar* to R. Eleazar follows this line of interpretation by maintaining that the vision of the upper lights at Sinai was mediated through the *Shekhinah*. In another context, the *Zohar* puts it as follows:

> When the Torah was given to Israel they saw and gazed directly upon the other mirror [*Shekhinah*] and the upper gradations, and they desired to gaze upon and

> to see the Glory of their Master. Thus they saw the supernal Glory of the Holy One, blessed be He.[24]

In yet another passage we read:

> It has been taught: when God revealed himself on Mount Sinai all of Israel saw as one who sees from a light in a crystal. And from that light each one saw that which Ezekiel the prophet did not see. Why? For those upper voices were revealed [or, according to a variant reading, inscribed] in one, as it is written, 'And all the people saw the voices.' But by Ezekiel the *Shekhinah* was revealed in her chariot but not more. Ezekiel saw as one who sees from behind many walls.[25]

Here, it is essential to note that, according to the *Zohar* as well as other 13th century kabbalists, the vision of God accorded to all prophets, with the exception of Moses,[26] was said to be mediated through the last of the divine grades, the feminine *Shekhinah*,[27] indeed, *Shekhinah* is called the 'gradation in which all the forms *(deyoqnin)* are seen'[28], or the 'mirror *(ḥeizu)* of the upper colors.'[29] One might even go so far as to say that, for the kabbalists, *Shekhinah* is not only the locus of prophetic experience but is the 'objective correlate' or 'sensory pole' of prophetic vision. In contrast to the standard medieval philosophic explanation of prophecy, espoused especially by Maimonides in the Jewish tradition,[30] for the mystics the object of prophetic vision is not simply a sensory image or idea in the mind of the prophet; it is rather an existent reality, indeed the divine reality as it is reflected in the last of the gradations.[31] On several occasions Naḥmanides criticised Maimonides on precisely this score: the latter contrasted too sharply prophetic vision with actual seeing, implying thereby that the contents of a prophetic vision have no basis in concrete external (or spatial) reality.[32] The author of the *Zohar*, in full consort with Naḥmanides, would claim that the object of prophetic vision does not exist only in the mind of the prophet, but is an objective reality.[33]

It follows, therefore, that the interpretation of R. Eleazar places the Sinaitic theophany in the spectrum of normal, i.e. other than Mosaic, prophetical experience wherein the locus of visionary experience is the last gradation. It is noteworthy, moreover, that the Sinaitic vision is contrasted with that of Ezekiel's Chariot-vision in Babylonia[34]: whereas Israel saw all the upper gradation as reflected in *Shekhinah*—as if in a crystal—Ezekiel only merited to see *Shekhinah* as reflected in her chariots, i.e. the angelic beings beneath the divine realm. It would appear from the view of R. Jose, however, that at Sinai Israel achieved a higher level of prophetic consciousness. Indeed, in another passage,[35] attributed again to R. Jose, the *Zohar* presents an alternative explanation according to which those at Sinai were said to be on a par with Moses, thereby exceeding the experiential level of other prophets. In this case as well, the *Zohar* contrasts Israel's vision at Sinai with that of Ezekiel. In the latter's vision Scripture constantly employs words like 'image', 'likeness', and 'appearance' for Ezekiel saw what he saw 'as if from behind a wall,'[36] whereas Israel saw God 'face to face'. 'Ezekiel saw the *image* of the supernal chariots for he saw from a place that was not so bright.' Israel saw a vision of the five upper voices[37] through which the Torah, according to one rabbinic view,[38] was given, whereas Ezekiel saw five corresponding gradations below the divine realm, viz., the stormy wind, a huge cloud, the flashing fire, a radiance, and the electrum (cf. Ezek. 1:4). At Sinai Israel achieved something of the status of Moses. The *Zohar* notes, accordingly, that Scripture says with respect to Moses, 'And the Lord descended on Mount Sinai and called to Moses' (Exod. 19:20), whereas it says, analogously, with respect to the nation, 'the Lord descended in front of all the people on Mount Sinai' (ibid. 19:11). Hence, at Sinai the king's 'head' and 'body' were revealed, whereas Ezekiel saw only the 'lower hand' or 'feet' of God. Ezekiel, as Isaiah, had a vision of the *Shekhinah*, but even that was a lower level of visualisation.[39]

As to the specific content of the visionary experience at Sinai we learn, moreover, that the vision had a decidedly gnostic element, i.e. through the vision the people were able to gain esoteric knowledge of the divine attributes. 'It has been taught: R. Jose b. R. Judah said: Israel saw here [at Sinai] that which Ezekiel the son of Buzi did not see; and they all comprehended the supernal, glorious·Wisdom.'[40] A clear link between the visionary and epistemological is thus formed: through the vision theosophical knowledge was gained. Already in midrashic sources, as well as in Philo, the seeing of the voices described in Exod. 20:15 was taken in the sense of a conceptual vision expressed through interpretation.[41] When Israel saw—i.e. comprehended—the words of the divine revelation, they immediately interpreted them. Drawing upon this ancient motif in Jewish thought, the *Zohar* thus elaborates on the hermeneutical quality of the visionary experience at Sinai:

> The ten words of the Torah [i.e. the Decalogue] contain all the [613] commandments,[42] comprehending what is above and below, the principle of the ten words of creation[43] . . . These [ten words] were carved on the tablets of stone, and all that was hidden in them was visible to their [the Israelites'] eyes, for they all knew and considered the secret of the 613 commandments of the Torah contained in them. All was visible to them, all was understood in the minds of Israel and all was revealed to their eyes. In that time all the secrets of Torah, above and below, were not removed from them, for they saw with their eyes the splendor of the Glory of their Master. Since the day when God created the world there was nothing like His revealing His Glory on Sinai.[44]

Through a vision of the divine Glory, the last of the emanations in the sefirotic pleroma, the people of Israel were able to penetrate the depths of Torah, to gain the hidden (i.e. kabbalistic) secrets of the 613 commandments which were contained in the Decalogue. The ten words of revelation correspond to the ten words of creation, which in turn correspond to the ten divine gradations. According to the *Zohar*, then, at Sinai the people of Israel gained knowledge of the esoteric as well as the exoteric dimension of Torah through a vision of the Glory. The esoteric dimension is fundamentally an understanding of the sefirotic pleroma expressed here specifically as the comprehension of secrets contained in the Decalogue. Thus, by seeing the Glory the people were capable of acquiring mystical knowledge embodied in the Torah.

INTERPRETATION

It is clear from the above section that the *Zohar* upholds a special kind of visionary experience at Sinai. In such a case the people were said to have seen either the upper five gradations directly, thereby achieving the level of Moses, or the last gradation as reflecting the upper five. In the text cited at the close of the last section, the people likewise were said to have seen the divine Glory, but at the same time all the secrets of the Torah. Indeed, according to that passage, these secrets were available to Israel precisely because they beheld the splendor of the Glory. Visual experience, therefore, grounds theosophical comprehension; gnosis flows out of a mystical seeing.

It can be further argued that, in the mind of the author of the *Zohar*, the process of kabbalistic exegesis is, in some sense, an imitation of the historical event of revelation.[45] Here too the Zoharic view is rooted in a long-standing rabbinic tradition according to which exegetical activity, or study of Torah, was linked to the Sinaitic theophany. Several rabbinic passages even stress that through interpretation of the Torah the supernatural phenomena of the Sinai event are recreated.[46] In the *Zohar* the correlation of exegesis and revelation is focused specifically on the fact that in the former, as in the latter, comprehension of the text is brought into relation with a vision of the Glory. Yet, whereas those present at Sinai comprehended esoteric truths of the Torah through a vision of the Glory, the mystics gain a vision of the Glory through intense study of the Torah.[47]

The close connection between those engaged in mystical exegesis and the *Shekhinah* is emphasised in any number of passages in the *Zohar*. Thus, for example, in one place we read that they mystical fellowship of R. Shim'on, the *havrayya*, are called the 'face of the *Shekhinah*' because '*Shekhinah* is hidden within them. She is concealed and they are revealed.'[48] In another place we read that R. Shim'on specifically gave the name 'Peniel' to two of his comrades, R. Eleazar and R. Abba, for 'they saw the face of the

Shekhinah'.[49] Drawing, moreover, upon earlier rabbinic sources wherein a clear link was established between the study of Torah and the immanent dwelling of the divine Presence,[50] the *Zohar* emphasises time and again that through study one cleaves to, or is united with, the *Shekhinah*.[51] To cite a few salient examples: 'It has been taught: whoever is engaged (*de-'ishtaddel*) in words of Torah and his lips whisper Torah, the Holy One, blessed be He, covers him and the *Shekhinah* spreads her wings over him.'[52] 'The wise shall obtain honor' (Prov. 3:35): Whoever is engaged (*de-'ishtaddel*) in the [study of] Torah merits to inherit the supernal portion in the Glory of the holy, supernal King . . . And who is that? That which is called the Glory of the Lord [i.e. *Shekhinah*] who does not ever depart from them.'[53] 'Whoever is engaged (*de-'ishtaddel*) in Torah it is as if he is engaged in the palace of the Holy One, blessed be He [i.e. the *Shekhinah*],[54] for the supernal palace of the Holy One, blessed be He, is the Torah.'[55] 'Come and see: When a person draws close to the Torah, which is called good, as it is written, 'the teaching of your mouth (*torat pikha*) is good to me' (Ps. 119:72), he draws close to the Holy One, blessed be He, who is called good, as it is written, 'The Lord is good to all' (ibid. 145–9), and he then comes close to being righteous, as it says, 'Happy is the just man for he is good' (Isa. 3:9). When he is righteous the *Shekhinah* rests upon him and teaches him the highest secrets of Torah, for the *Shekhinah* is joined only to one who is good, for the righteous [*Ṣaddiq*, i.e. the ninth masculine gradation, *Yesod*] and righteousness (*Ṣeddeq*, i.e. the tenth feminine gradation, *Shekhinah*] go together as one.'[56] Elsewhere, those who are engaged in the study of Torah are called 'comrades of the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Community of Israel', i.e. *Tif'eret* and *Shekhinah*, for when they utter words of interpretation they 'cleave to the wings' of *Shekhinah* and their words are 'brought forth and dwell in the bosom of the King.'[57] To cite one final example, the *Zohar* explains the Talmudic dictum[58] that Sabbath eve is the most appropriate time for the scholar's marital duty, for during the week the scholar, i.e. the mystic exegete, is in union with the *Shekhinah* and therefore must be separated from his earthly consort.[59]

Going beyond all previous midrashic or aggadic sources, however, at times the *Zohar* notes that hermeneutical activity is not merely a divinely-inspired state, but the very means to behold the divine.[60] That is, through the mystical study of Scripture the kabbalist can see the divine light hidden in the text, for the letters themselves are nothing but the configurations of that light.[61] 'There is no word in the Torah that does not have several lights shining to every side . . . The supernal Wisdom shines in it for the one who needs it.'[62] The words of Torah are likened to garments[63] that cover this divine light, and only the mystic, who contemplates the esoteric sense hidden in the words of the text, can again apprehend this light. As

Moses de León succinctly expressed it in one of his Hebrew works. *Mishkan ha-'Edut* (1293):

> Our holy Torah is a perfect Torah *(Torah temimah)*, 'all the glory of the royal princess is inward' (Ps. 45:14). But because of our great and evil sins today 'her dress is embroidered with golden mountings (ibid.) . . . Thus God, blessed be He, laid a 'covering of dolphin skin over it' (Num. 4:6) with the visible things [of this world]. And who can see *(lir'ot)* and contemplate *(le-histakkel)* the great and awesome light hidden in the Torah except for the supernal and holy ancient ones *(qaddishei 'elyon ha-qadmonim)*. They entered her sanctuary and the great light was revealed to them . . . They removed the mask from her.[64]

Of the various levels of interpretation of the Torah,[65] the deepest or most profound is that which envisions the text as a *corpus symbolicum* of the divine world. Each word of Scripture is potentially a symbol of the divine life and as such participates in this life. Kabbalistic exegesis, therefore, is a form of revelatory experience, for the study of Torah not only generates a visionary experience but itself constitutes such a vision. To appreciate fully this last claim one must bear in mind several of the kabbalistic principles accepted by the author of the *Zohar*. The Torah in its mystical essence is nothing other than the divine Name, the Tetragrammaton, which itself comprises the theosophic structure of the ten gradations.[66] Hence, the Torah (mystically conceived) is identical with God. Although this tacit assumption is clearly the foundational principle that lies behind almost every word of the *Zohar*, it is stated quite explicitly in one place that 'the Holy One, blessed be He, is called the Torah.'[67] And, again, a bit further on in the same context, one reads that 'the Torah is nothing but the Holy One, blessed be He.'[68] It follows, insofar as the Torah is nothing other than the divine edifice, the study of the Torah itself necessarily entails some sort of visionary experience of God. De León would have surely subscribed to the following view espoused by a contemporary of his, Joseph Hamadan: by studying the letters of the Torah, or even by simply gazing upon the open Torah scroll, one apprehends the form of the divine.[69] Seeing the text for the kabbalist is therefore tantamount to seeing the shape of God.

It is through interpretation of the Torah, in accord with kabbalistic principles, that the mystic participates again in the act of revelation, now understood in a decidedly visual sense. This experience exceeds the normal range of prophetic visionary experience, however, for the kabbalist attains that which the Israelite attained at Sinai. Thus, in one passage the *Zohar* explains the Talmudic dictum that 'the sage is better than the prophet'[70] by noting that 'those who are engaged in Torah' *(de-mishtaddelei be-'oraita')* stand on a higher level in the sefirotic world than do the prophets. 'Those who are engaged in Torah stand above in the place which is called Torah [i.e. *Tif'eret*], the pillar of all Faith *(qiyyuma' de-khol meheimanuta')*,[71] and the prophets stand below in a place which is called *Neṣaḥ* and *Hod*.'[72] Below the prophets are those who 'utter words by the Holy Spirit,' for they are linked particularly to the last *sefirah*.[73] Those engaged in Torah are on the highest level, that which corresponds symbolically to the written Torah in the divine realm, i.e. *Tif'eret*, the sixth gradation, the *sefirah* of Moses. It is clear that by the expression 'those engaged in Torah,' *de-mishtaddelei be-'oraita'*, the *Zohar* means specifically the mystics who study and interpret Torah according to the kabbalistic system.[74] The theosophic exegete, therefore, is the enlightened one, the *maskil*, who attains the level of Moses.[75]

That the kabbalist, according to the *Zohar*, is on a par with Moses is stated openly in another passage wherein Mosaic prophecy is contrasted with that accorded to the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Whereas the latter had visions of the 'lower colours' as reflected through the prism of the *Shekhinah*, Moses alone beheld the 'upper colours' that are 'concealed and invisible.' After having established the different modes of prophetic vision, the *Zohar* interprets Dan. 12:3, 'And the enlightened *(maskilim)* will shine like the splendour *(zohar)* of the sky.'

> Who are the enlightened ones? This refers to the wise one who comprehends by himself those things [or words: *millin*] which no man can speak with his mouth. These are called enlightened. 'They will shine like the splendour of the sky.' Which sky? The sky of Moses [i.e. *Tif'eret*] which stands in the middle [of the divine edifice]. The splendour of this [sky] is hidden, and its colour is not revealed.[76]

It is quite evident that the enlightened, the *maskilim*, are the mystics, or more accurately, the kabbalists.[77] It is thus that the author of the *Zohar* attributes to the enlightened the quality of understanding on their own, a character trait already singled out by the *Mishnah* as appropriate for one desiring to engage in *ma'aseh merkavah*, speculation on the divine Chariot.[78] Moreover, we are told that the enlightened 'shine like the splendor of the sky' which is identified further as the 'sky of Moses.'[79] The latter term refers symbolically to the *sefirah* of *Tif'eret*, the divine gradation which, as was mentioned above, corresponds to Moses. That is to say, therefore, that the mystic is capable of reaching the level of Moses.[80] Quite remarkably, the continuum of experience for prophet and mystic appears to be one and the same.[81] That implies two things: first, classical prophecy is reinterpreted as a mode of mystical experience involving visualisation of the *sefirot*, and, second, revelatory experience of God is still a distinct possibility for the kabbalist.[82] As I have suggested, the vehicle to achieve this revelatory experience is exegesis, interpretation of the Torah which is the corporeal form of God.

That the mystic visionary *par excellence* is the theosophic exegete is substantiated further by the following interpretations of Dan. 12:3:

> (1) 'And the enlightened will shine' (Daniel 12:3). Who are the enlightened? Those who know how to contemplate (*le-'istakkala'*) the Glory of their Master and know the secret of Wisdom, to enter without shame into the world-to-come.[83] These shine like the upper splendor. And it says 'the enlightened' (*ha-maskilim*) rather than 'the knowers' (*ha-yod'im*) for these verily are they who contemplate (*de-mistakla'an*) the inner, hidden secrets which are not disclosed or transmitted to every person.[84]
>
> (2) 'And the enlightened will shine,' the 'enlightened' refers to those who contemplate (*de-mistakkelei*) the mystery of Wisdom in the secret mysteries of the Torah . . . All who are engaged (*de-mishtaddelei*) in the [study of] Torah are called *maskilim*, [for] with wisdom they contemplate (*mistakkelan*) the secret of the upper Wisdom.[85]

From both of these passages it is clear that mystic contemplation, interpretative in nature, is a visual sort of comprehension.[86] The enlightened is one who gazes upon the Glory of God and thereby contemplates 'the mystery of Wisdom,' which is embodied in 'the secret mysteries of the Torah.' The one 'engaged' in the study of Torah, moreover, is 'enlightened' for only such a person contemplates the upper Wisdom inherent in Torah. Clearly, then, it would seem that the revelatory and midrashic modes here converge, for visualisation of the divine is engendered by the hermeneutic relation that one has to the received text. Indeed, for the author of the *Zohar*, the perception of the colours or lights, the *sefirot*, is best attained through a mystically intuitive grasp and exposition of Scripture. Although the technique of *midrash* was part of the kabbalistic mind-set from the beginnings of theosophic speculation in Europe,[87] it is in the *Zohar* that the task of exegesis becomes the *sine qua non* of mystical praxis. The goal of kabbalistic exposition, however, is not hearing the word of God as related in the text but rather seeing the hidden mysteries—i.e. the divine light[88]—concealed in the letters and words of that text. So central is the visionary element to mystical exegesis that the *Zohar* emphasizes that the kabbalist, the one who contemplates the mysteries of the Torah, is called by Scripture the 'enlightened one' and not simply 'one who knows' for the word *maskil* derives from the root *skhl* which, like the Greek *theoria* and the Latin *contemplatio*, connotes comprehension through seeing.

The meeting of the visionary and hermeneutical modes in the *Zohar* is brought out in the following discourse of the 'Old Man' (*sabba'*) concerning the nature of interpretation and the inner layers of the Torah:

> The Holy One, blessed be He, enters all the hidden things [or words: *millin*] that He has made into the holy Torah, and everything is found in the Torah.

> And the Torah reveals that hidden thing [or word] and then it is immediately clothed in another garment where it is hidden and not revealed. And even though that thing [or word] is hidden in its garment the sages, who are full of eyes, see it from within its garment. When that thing [or word] is revealed, before it enters into a garment, the one of open eyes [i.e. the mystic sage] casts [his eyes] upon it. And even though [the thing or word] is immediately concealed, it does not depart from their eyes.[89]

In this text the *Zohar* repeatedly employs metaphors derived from the phenomenon of sight. God is said to hide secret matters within the Torah and clothe them in a garment,[90] the removal of which allows them to be seen by the sage. Hence, the mystic is called the 'wise one full of eyes.'[91] Furthermore, perhaps borrowing from Maimonides' description of truth in the introduction to the *Guide of the Perplexed*,[92] de León here describes the concealed truth of Torah as that which momentarily flashes out from behind its hiding place, only to quickly return to another one.

In the continuation of this passage, the *Zohar* presents the famous parable of the beautiful princess (literally, beloved, *reḥimata'*) secluded in her palace, hinting to her lover (*reḥima'*) to approach, and ultimately uniting with him in matrimony. On the allegorical level the princess in her castle symbolises the Torah which is hidden behind several layers of meaning.[93] The lover is the mystic who must be gradually led to the deepest level of hermeneutic experience, knowledge of the esoteric layer of the text.[94] Though in this case the *Zohar* does employ acoustic language to describe the process of disclosure, it is clear that the main mode of the revelation is again visual. Hence, the word of Torah, as the princess, appears and then quickly vanishes. The mystic interpreter, as the lover, alone can *see* his beloved.

It may be suggested, moreover, that in terms of kabbalistic theosophy the princess functions as a symbol for the *Shekhinah*, the feminine potency of God, which is also the divine gradation that corresponds to the oral Torah. Indeed, the four stages of the relationship between the princess and lover represent four levels of meaning: *peshaṭ* (literal or contextual), *derashah* (homiletical), *haggadah* (allegorical),[95] and *sod* (mystical or esoteric). (Only the former three are explicitly named; the fourth is implied.)[96] These four levels—including the literal or contextual sense—from the perspective of the kabbalist, comprise four distinct hermeneutical postures which collectively make up the oral Torah. On the symbolic plane, therefore, the parable is alluding to the mystic's relationship to the written Torah as mediated through four aspects of oral Torah.

Textual interpretation, for the author of the *Zohar*, thus involves an intimate relation between the mystic and *Shekhinah*; indeed, the kabbalist, as I have already discussed, who is engaged or occupied with study of Torah is said to be united with the *Shekhinah*. That the model in this case was the Sinaitic revelation as well can be adduced by an analysis of the passage which directly precedes the parable wherein the 'Old Man' sets out to interpret Exodus 24:18, 'Moses went inside the cloud and ascended the mountain.'

> What was that cloud? It is as it is written, 'And my bow I placed in the cloud' (Gen. 9:13). It has been taught that the rainbow removed its garments and gave them to Moses and with that garment Moses ascended to the mountain. And from it [the garment] he saw what he saw and he delighted in all.

The prototype of the mystics, Moses, must receive the garment of the rainbow before he ascends to the mountain to receive the Torah. It would appear that the rainbow here is a symbol for *Yesod*,[97] and the cloud a symbol of *Shekhinah*. Moses must put on the garment of *Yesod* before entering into the cloud, *Shekhinah*, and ascending further to receive the Torah.[98] By adorning himself with the cloak of the rainbow in order to enter into the cloud, Moses emulates the theosophic process by means of which the masculine *Yesod* (= phallus) enters into the feminine *Shekhinah*.[99] In another sense, by this act Moses symbolically enacts the unification of the oral Torah and the written Torah which, kabbalistically, correspond to *Shekhinah* and *Tif'eret*. That is, by entry into the one, the feminine oral Torah, Moses can gain access to the other, the masculine written Torah.[100]

The hermeneutic process follows the same pattern, for by means of interpretation, a bridge is established between masculine and feminine, written and oral, and the mystical exegete, as Moses, stands in the position of *Yesod*[101] the conduit or channel connecting the two. Although this view is implied in any number of Zoharic contexts, it is stated with particular clarity in the following passage:

> Come and see the secret of the matter. The Community of Israel [*Shekhinah*] does not stand before the King [*Tif'eret*] except by means of the Torah. Whenever earthly Israel are engaged in [the study of] Torah the Community of Israel dwells with them . . . Thus, when the Community of Israel is aroused before the King by means of Torah, her forces are strengthened and the Holy King is glad to receive her. However, when the Community of Israel comes before the King and Torah is not found with her, her strength, as it were, is weakened.[102]

Those who study Torah stengthen the *Shekhinah* in order to enable her to unite with her masculine consort, the Holy King. It is clear, therefore, that the mystics engaged in Torah fulfill the function of *Yesod*, the gradation that unifies the feminine and masculine potencies of God.[103]

It is surely not insignificant that in the context of unfolding the nature of mystical hermeneutics the *Zohar* interprets a biblical verse connected to the Sinaitic event. Underlying this strategy is the assumed identification between the modalities of revelation and interpretation. The mystic, like Moses, is capable of achieving union with *Shekhinah*, a union which is the relationship that bears the fruit of theosophic speculation and exegesis.[104] It is, moreover, the medium of visionary experience, for through the light of the *Shekhinah* the kabbalist can penetrate into the hidden depths of the text and thereby contemplate the upper secrets of the divine realm. Hence, at the end of the parable the *Zohar* calls the lover (the mystic), who finally sees the princess (the Torah) face to face and learns of her secret ways, 'husband of Torah, master of the house.' The same appellation 'master of the house', *ma'rei de-veita'*, is applied elsewhere in the *Zohar* to Moses[105] and to the *ṣaddiq*, the righteous one who is the mundane correlate to *Yesod* above.[106] Similarly, the phrase 'husband of Torah' is reminiscent of another phrase used in connection with Moses in the *Zohar*, 'husband of *'Elohim*.'[107] Both of these expressions point to the fact that Moses had achieved union with the *Shekhinah* (referred to symbolically as 'house' and as *'Elohim*).[108] Here, the two expressions are applied to the mystic who masters the secrets of Torah. Again we see the intricate and essential correlation which the author of the *Zohar* establishes between the mystic exegete and Moses and, by implication, between the processes of interpretation and revelation.

In sum, then, gnosis for the *Zohar* is primarily visual and not auditory. The mystic, as the prophet, indeed the greatest of prophets, Moses, can have a visual experience of God. Yet, this seeing is decidedly text-oriented, for it is through midrashic activity that the mystic can attain a revelation of the divine. This conviction was certainly upheld by the author of the *Zohar* himself who construed his task as imparting a new–old revelation through the means of textual interpretation. Just as he reached the level of Moses by studying the Mosaic text, so too others studying his document could in turn share in the dynamic and shine with the splendour of Moses' gradation. This implicit assumption which colours the entire literary effort of the *Zohar* was stated succinctly by the anonymous author of *Tiqqunei Zohar*.

> In that time 'the enlightened will shine like the splendor of the sky' (Dan. 12:3). What is the 'splendour?' Ṭhe gradation of Moses, our rabbi, the 'Central Pillar' [*Tif'eret*], because of whom this work is called the 'Book of Splendour' (*Sefer ha-Zohar*).[109]

How well this kabbalist has captured the true secret of the *Zohar*! The classic of Jewish mysticism conveys in so many different ways the presumption that its author had reached the symbolic level of Moses in the divine world and had thus identified with the historical Moses. By interpreting the Torah which the ancient Moses had revealed, this new Moses was in effect revealing a new Torah. His interpretation was concomitantly a revelation. The extraordinary power which the *Zohar* had in subsequent generations of Jewish history must be seen against this background. The identification of *midrash* and visionary experience opened the door for others to similarly have visions of God by studying the letters of the sacred text. In its turn the *Zohar* itself became an exegetical basis for revelatory experience.

NOTES

1 See G. Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987). pp. 35–39, 238–43.

2 Shlomo Pines uses this Platonic term to describe Maimonides' conviction that 'the prophets were philosophers.' See 'Translator's Introduction' in *Guide of the Perplexed* (translated by S. Pines, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963). p. cxx. For a criticism of Pines' view, see L. Berman, 'Review of Pines' Translation of the *Guide*', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 85 (1974): 411–412; *idem*, 'Maimonides, Disciple of Alfarabi,' *Israel Oriental Studies* 4 (1974): 167: and I. Twersky. *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 366. n. 25.

3 Cf. S Rawidowicz, 'On Interpretation', in *Studies in Jewish Thought* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974), pp. 47–48, 52–53; G. Scholem, 'Revelation and Tradition as Religious Categories', in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), pp. 287–289.

4 See the remarks of D. Halivni-Weiss, *Midrash, Mishna, Gemara* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 16. Cf. also the description of the relation of revelation to *midrash* given by R. Bloch, 'Midrash', in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism*, ed. by W. S. Green (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978), p. 31; and G. Porton, 'Midrash: Palestinian Jews and the Hebrew Bible in the Greco–Roman Period,' in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II.19.2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1979), pp. 111–112.

5 On the connection between the process of textual interpretation (*midrash*) and prophetic states of consciousness in Jewish apocalyptic literature, see the relevant remarks of I. Gruenwald, 'Knowledge and Vision: Towards a Clarification of Two "Gnostic" Concepts in Light of Their Alleged Origins', *Israel Oriental Studies* 3 (1973): 68 and 104. Cf. also D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), pp. 117, 119–120, 183 ff; J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 16; Scholars Press, 1977), pp. 74–78; Susan Niditch, 'The Visionary', in *Septuagint and Cognate Studies*, ed. by J. J. Collins and G. W. E. Nickelsburg (Scholars Press, 1979), 12: 153–179. J. Kugel, *Early Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), pp. 58–59. On the process of 'inspired biblical exegesis' as a 'divinely guided *midrash*' in the Qumran sect, see L. H. Schiffman, *Sectarian Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls Courts, Testimony and the Penal Code* (Brown Judaic Studies 33, Chico, Ca.: Scholars Press, 1983), pp. 15–16. On the connection between vision of God and study in Philo see *De Mutatione Nominum* 259–260, and the interpretation of that passage in P. Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo* (NovTSupp 10; Leiden: Brill, 1965), pp. 99ff., esp. 115–118. And on the connection between study of a text and visionary experience in early Jewish mysticism, see M. Idel, 'The Concept of Torah in the Hekhalot and its Transformation in the Kabbalah'

(in Hebrew), *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 1 (1981), pp. 35–36, and p. 36, nn. 38–39. See also M. Idel, 'Infinities of Torah in Kabbalah', in *Midrash and Literature*, ed. by G. Hartman and S. Budick (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 141–144. On pneumatic interpretation in later kabbalistic sources, see now M. Idel, *Kabbalah New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 234–243. A related question is the relationship between the visionary experience and the description or report of that vision in a commonly accepted literary tradition. Cf. Russell, *op. cit.*, pp. 161–173; M. Cohen, *The Shi'ur Qomah: Liturgy and Theurgy in Pre-Kabbalistic Jewish Mysticism* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), pp. 2–10.

6 Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, pp. 39–44, 49–53. Concerning the midrashic character of the *Sefer ha-Bahir*, see also J. Dan, 'Midrash and the Dawn of Kabbalah,' in *Midrash and Literature*, pp. 127–139.

7 See Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1961), p. 120.

8 Of the many examples that could be cited I will mention but a few: (1) *Zohar* II, 213b: 'Praiseworthy is the portion of one who enters and departs [a oft-repeated technical expression in *Zohar* for mystical exegesis based on the famous rabbinic legend of the four who entered Paradise; according to one version R. Akiva alone entered and exited in peace; see T. Hagigah 2:4; B. Hagigah 14b; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:28], who knows how to contemplate the secrets of his master and to comprehend (*le-'itdabbeqa'*) them. Through these mysteries one can cleave (*le-'itdabbeqa'*) to his master'. (2) *Zohar* II, 217a: 'Those who consider his name' (Mal. 3:16) [refers to] all those who contemplate words of Torah to cleave (*le-'itdabbeqa'*) to their master, to know the secret of the holy name and to establish the wisdom of his name in their hearts.' (3) *Zohar* III, 36a: 'All those engaged in Torah cleave (*mitdabbeqin*) to the Holy One, blessed be, He and are crowned in the crowns of the Torah [on the image of the crown as a symbol for mystical union, see below, n. 47);' (4) *Zohar Hadash*, 27d: 'Praiseworthy are Israel for the Holy One, blessed be He, gave them the Torah to reveal to them the highest secrets. Concerning them it is written, 'You who cleave (*ha-deveqim*) to the Lord your God are all alive today' (Deut. 4:4); (5) ibid., 29a: 'The one who draws close to the Torah . . . draws close to the Holy One, blessed be He.' Underlying all of these passages, and the examples could be greatly multiplied, is the assumed identification of the Torah and God; see below, n. 66. The Zoharic usage of *dvq* in the double sense of comprehension and cleaving reflects the medieval philosophical usage of the word *devequt* to describe the state of conjunction between human and divine (or Active) intellect; see J. Klatzkin, *Thesaurus Philosophicus: Linguae Hebraicae et Veteris et Recentioris* (Berlin, 1928), 1:128–129.

9 Indeed in several contexts the author of the *Zohar*, following earlier midrashic precedents (see *Sifra Leviticus*, De-Vore' de-Nedavah, 1:12; *Sifre Numbers*, pisqa 103; *Numbers Rabbah* 14:22), seems to reject the possibility that one who is still in a bodily existence can see God at all; see, e.g., *Zohar* II, 66b; III, 147a. Such a posture is unequivocally adopted by Moses de León in *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, ed. by A. W. Greenup (London, 1911), p. 19. After discussing the various grades of prophetic experience he cautions the reader: 'In any event God, may He be blessed, is removed from every idea and thought, for no one can comprehend [Him] and He, may He be blessed, has no image or form. Thus to Torah speaks in the language of man in order to settle their minds.' De León goes on to say that at

times even in the sensible world people see images that have no basis in reality, as, for example, one who sees mirages while wandering through the desert. The images seen by prophets likewise have no reality-base but are merely the means by which the prophet visualises and comprehends that which lies beyond visualisation and comprehension, just as the anthropomorphic expressions in Scripture are only means by which finite minds comprehend the truth. The influence of the Maimonidean perspective here is clear; see below, n. 31. It must be pointed out, however, that in this passage de León was clearly adopting an apologetical stance, possibly in response to critics who may have challenged kabbalah on the grounds of introducing multiplicity into the divine. In order to defend kabbalah, therefore, de León felt it necessary to emphasise that God is one being and the various divine *sefirot* or emanations (here called *'ispaqlari'ot*, i.e. lights) named by the kabbalists are in truth one light that is only perceived under multiple aspects. See below, n. 32.

10 *Zohar* II, 81a–b.

11 Cf. the views of R. Akiva and R. Judah the Prince in *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Ishmael, Masekhta de-Baḥodesh*, 9, ed. by J. Lauterbach (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1933), 2·266–267: 'R. Akiva says: They saw and heard that which was visible. They saw the fiery word coming out of the mouth of the Almighty as it was struck upon the tablets . . . Rabbi says: This is to proclaim the excellence of the Israelites, for when they all stood before Mount Sinai to receive the Torah they interpreted the divine word as soon as they heard it.' According to Akiva, then, seeing the voices involved a mystical perception of the divine word akin to fire, whereas, according to Rabbi, the seeing of the voice (i.e. the word of God) is an intellectual perception involving interpretation (cf. *Sifre Deuteronomy*, pisqa 313, ed. by Finkelstein [New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1969], p. 355). Cf. E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1978), pp. 266–267. A parallel to Akiva's interpretation is found in *Hekhalot Rabbati* 24:3 cited in Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1965), p. 62. On the mystical conception implicit in Akiva's view, see I. Gruenwald, 'Some Critical Notes on the First Part of *Sefer Yeṣira*,' *Revue des Études Juives* 132 (1973): 501–504; I. Chernus, *Mysticism in Rabbinic Judaism* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1982), p. 3. It is also instructive to compare R. Akiva's view with Philo, *De Decalogo*, 32–33, where the voice heard at Sinai is said to be 'an invisible soul', 'a rational sound . . . which giving shape and tension to the air and changing to flaming fire, sounded forth . . . an articulate voice.' See ibid. 46–47: 'Then from the midst of the fire that streamed from heaven there sounded forth . . . a voice, for the flame became articulate speech . . . and so clearly and distinctly were the words formed by it that they seemed to see rather than hear them. What I say is vouched for by the law in which it is written, "All the people saw the voice" . . . for it is the case that the voice of men is audible, but the voice of God truly visible.' See also *De Vita Mosis* II. 213, where Philo says that the ten commandments were 'promulgated by God not through His prophet but by a voice which, strange paradox, was visible (διὰ φωγῆς—τὸ παραδόξοτατον—ὁρατῆς) and aroused the eyes rather than the ears of the bystanders.' Yet, in *De Migratione Abrahami*, 47–49, Philo's view seems to approximate that of R. Judah the Prince: '. . . whereas the voice of mortal beings is judged by hearing . . . the words of God are seen as light is seen; for we are told that "all the people saw the voice," not that they heard it; for what

was happening was not an impact on air made by organs of mouth and tongue, but virtue shining with intense brilliance, wholly resembling a fountain of reason . . . This shews that words spoken by God are interpreted (κριτεριον) by the power of sight residing in the soul.' Cf. H. Wolfson, *Philo Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), 2:37–38. From other places in the Philonic corpus it is clear that Philo maintained the supremacy of eyesight over hearing as the higher level of the soul's perfection; see, e.g. *De Ebrietate* 82, and see below, n. 91. This 'spiritualized' reading of Exod. 20:15 (20:18 according to the LXX) appears in Patristic literature as well; see Origen, *Contra Celsum*, translated by H. Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 377, and n. 6 for other references. See also H. Wolfson, *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 2:104–106 where parallels between Philo's treatment of the Sinaitic theophany and that of Judah ha-Levi are drawn. For other examples of the medieval treatment, cf. Abraham ibn Ezra's commentary on Exod. 20:15 (ed. by Weiser [Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1977], 2:140) who explains that it was appropriate to use the verb 'seeing' in conjunction with the object 'voices' because 'all the senses are united in one place [in the forehead]' and therefore can be used interchangeably. See also ibn Ezra on Deut. 4:12 (ed. by Weiser, 3:224). According to Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, I. 46 (ed. by Pines, pp. 99–100) the 'seeing' spoken of in Exod. 20:15 refers either to intellectual apprehension or to prophetic vision. See, however, ibid. II. 33 where Maimonides interprets the 'seeing' of the voices as a reference to the hearing of the voice of the trumpet. And cf. the commentary of Rashi to Exod. 20:15: 'They saw that which should be heard—something which is impossible to see on any other occasion.' Rashi's view is based on R. Akiva's interpretation cited above. See also Rashi's commentary to B. Berakhot 6b, s.v. 'the very voices which were present at the giving of the Torah': 'It is said that [the voices] were seen and even though a voice is not seen this one was seen.'

12 Cf. Deut. 4:11, 'The mountain was ablaze with flames to the very skies, darkness, clouds, and a thick fog.' And ibid. 5:19–20, 'The Lord spoke those words to your whole congregation at the mountain from within the *fire*, the cloud, and the dense fog . . . When you heard the voice out of *darkness*.' And see *Zohar* I, 11b: 'Darkness is fire, as it is written, "When you heard the voice out of the darkness" and "The mountain was ablaze with flames to the very skies, darkness etc."' The source for the equation between darkness and elemental fire appears to be Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, II. 30 (ed. by Pines, p. 351). A similar explanation for the revelatory experience is offered by R. Saadia Gaon (882–940) in his commentary on *Sefer Yeṣirah*; see the text published by M. Lambert, *Commentaire sur le Séfer Yesira* (Paris, 1891), pp. 11–12 (Arabic section) and pp. 26–27 (French translation). For a Hebrew paraphrase see R. Judah ben Barzilai, *Perush 'al Sefer Yeṣirah*, ed. by S. J. Halberstam (Berlin, 1885), p. 273. According to Saadia, the verse says that they 'saw' the voices, even though hearing would have been a more appropriate metaphor, because in the dark cloud on Mount Sinai the letters of the divine voices took shape and were visible from within the darkness. At Sinai the Israelites saw images of the letters of the divine words in the fire just as on a cold day when one speaks vapors emerge from one's mouth. Saadia's explanation is also cited by Pseudo-Baḥya, *Sefer Torot ha-Nefesh*, translated by Isaac Broydé (Paris, 1896), p. 18, and Menaḥem Recanati (Italian kabbalist, early

14th century) in his *Commentary on the Torah* (Jerusalem, 1961) 26a. See also Baḥya ben Asher, *Commentary on the Torah*, ed. by C. D. Chavel (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1981), 2:206, to Exod. 20:18, 'all the people saw the voices.' Bahya reflects the views of Maimonides (see preceding note) and Saadia: 'This seeing is a matter of comprehension . . . Or perhaps it says "they saw" because the voice emerged from the fire . . . and they saw the fire; therefore it says "they saw the voices."' Cf. Jacob ben Sheshet, *Meshiv Devarim Nekhoḥim*, ed. by G. Vajda (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1968), p. 191: 'A subtle essence (*hawayah daqqah*) spreads forth in the air until they (!) become dense and are an actual substance (*hawayah mamashit*). From there they emerge and one is seen by the eyes and the other heard by the ear. Similar to this is the revelation of the Torah, for it is written, "From the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; on earth He let you see His great fire; and from amidst that fire you heard His words" (Deut. 4:36) . . . It says that the voice went out from heaven, and they [the Israelites] heard it but they did not understand it until that voice reached the fire, and the voice went out from the fire and they understood the speech.'

13 Cf. *Zohar* II, 194a: 'All [of Israel] saw the upper lights illuminated in the speculum that shines [i.e. the sixth emanation, *Tif'eret*], as it is written, "And all the people saw the voices" (Exod. 20:15).' The source for this kabbalistic interpretation of the verse from Exod. is to be found in *Sefer ha-Bahir*, ed. by R. Margaliot (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1978), §§ 45, 48. An alternative interpretation of Exod. 20:15, which likewise emphasises the visionary characteristic of the Sinai event, is to be found in *Zohar* II, 146a: 'When the Holy One, blessed be He, was revealed on Mount Sinai, He gave the Torah in ten words (or commandments). Each and every word produced a voice and that voice divided into seventy voices [cf. B. Shabbat 88b; *Tanḥuma*, Shemot, 25; *Exodus Rabbah* 28:4]. All of [the voices] shone and sparkled before the eyes of Israel, and with their very eyes they saw the splendour of His glory, as it is written, "And all the people saw the voices."' See also the graphic description in *Zohar Hadash*, 41b–c of Israel's seeing the letters of the first word of the Decalogue, *'anokhi*, being engraved on the tablets. For a fuller discussion of visionary experience in 13th century kabbalah, see my forthcoming book, 'Through a Speculum that Shines: A Study of Visionary Experience in Medieval Jewish Mysticism.'

14 A reference to this Zoharic view is given in Moses de León's *Mishkan ha-'Edut*, MS Berlin Quat. Or. 833, f. 35a: 'And I have seen in the secrets of Torah a deep matter concerning the verse "And all the people saw the Voices," the secret of the speculum that does not shine [i.e. *Shekhinah*] They (!) said that this speculum is hidden and takes form. She stands and is momentarily seen, then returns and is hidden as at first; she takes form and afterwards is hidden and removed. This is the hidden secret of the verse, "all the people are seeing, "*we-khol ha-'am ro'im*. It is written *ro'im* [i.e. in the present tense] and not *ra'u* [i.e. in the past tense].' The use of the present tense implies that the activity of seeing described here is not completed for indeed the object of vision, the *Shekhinah*, is characterised by a ceaseless dialectic of appearing and hiding. See below, n. 93. Cf. Naḥmanides' *Commentary on the Torah*, ed. by C. D. Chavel (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1976), Gen. 15:1, 1:89, and Deut. 5:19, 2:369. See below, n. 23.

15 See *Zohar* I, 15b, 30b, 53b, 60a, 208a, 247a; II, 90b, 126a, 147b, and elsewhere. Cf. especially *Tiqqunei Zohar*, § 30 (74b): '"And all the people saw the Voices" (*'et ha-qolot*). [The word] *'et* refers to the lower *Shekhinah* which ascends in each voice of the seven voices.' In interpreting this seemingly insignificant word, the *Zohar* follows an ancient midrashic practice attributed particularly to the school of Akiva; see B. Pesaḥim 22b. Cf. F. Dornseiff, *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie* (Leipzig, 1922), p. 125, n. 2.

16 Cf. S. Lieberman's appendix to Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*, pp. 118–126; Chernus, *Mysticism in Rabbinic Tradition*, pp. 1–32; A. Goldberg, *Untersuchungen über die Vorstellung von der Schekhinah in den Früher Rabbinischen Literatur* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), pp. 205–209. See in particular the statement of R. Shim'on bar Yoḥai in *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Ishmael*, Yitro Baḥodesh, 2: 'They said: Our wish is to see our king; one who hears is not comparable to one who sees. God said to him: Give them what they have requested, "For on the third day the Lord will descend in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai" (Exod. 19:11).' See also *Midrash Tehillim*, ed. by S. Buber (New York: Om Publishing, 1947), 69:2, 161a; 149:1, 270a.

17 Cf. *Tanḥuma*, Yitro, 11, where it is stressed that 'the ten words [of revelation] all emerged from the mouth of God in one voice.' See also *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Ishmael*, Yitro Baḥodesh, 4: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, said all the ten commandments in one word, and afterwards specified each commandment by itself.'

18 *Sefer ha-Bahir*, § 48. The Bahiric passage is discussed in the context of other rabbinic statements concerning the voices of revelation by R. Ezra of Gerona in his commentary to the Talmudic aggadot; see MS Vatican 441, ff. 49a–b. See below, n. 23.

19 Ibid., § 49. First person pronouns, such as *'anokhi* and *'ani* subsequently became standard kabbalistic symbols for *Shekhinah*. Cf. *Zohar* I, 6b, 65b, 89a, 204b, 228a; II, 85a–b, 236b; 3:178b (*Piqqudin*). See Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 216, 401, n. 38.

20 Cf. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 49.

21 R. Ezra, *Commentary on Shir ha-Shirim, Kitvei Ramban*, ed. by C. D. Chavel (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1978), 2:487. And cf. the passage translated and discussed by Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, pp. 49–50: 'The form of the written Torah is that of the colours of white fire, and the form of the oral Torah has coloured forms as of black fire . . . And so the written Torah can taken on corporeal form only through the power of the oral Torah.' Scholem attributed the text to R. Isaac the Blind of Provence, who wrote in the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th century. See, however, M. Idel, 'Kabbalistic Materials from the School of R. David ben Yehudah he-Ḥasid' [in Hebrew], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 2 (1982–1983): 170, n. 9, who suggests that the text was written by a certain kabbalist, R. Isaac, who wrote at the end of the 13th or beginning of the 14th century. See *idem*, 'Infinities of Torah in Kabbalah,' in *Midrash and Literature*, p. 145.

22 This is based on the view of R. Yoḥanan who stated that the Torah was given in seven voices which then divided into seventy corresponding to the 70 nations of the world. See B. Shabbat 88a; *Tanḥuma*, Shemot, 25; *Exodus Rabbah* 28:4. On the connection between the seven voices and the 70 names of God, see the

interesting comment in *Hekhalot Zutarti*, in P. Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot Literatur* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1981), § 396: 'And this youth [i.e. Metatron] who is written in seven voices, in seven letters, in the seventy names.' See also ibid., § 390, where it is stated that Metatron prevents the celestial beasts from hearing the voice of the divine speech and the sacred name which he mentions by means of the seven voices.

23 Naḥmanides' *Commentary on the Torah*, 1:388. See also Naḥmanides' commentary on Gen. 15:1, p. 89, Exod. 3:13, p. 291, Deut. 5:19, 2:369, and 34:10, p. 504. In contrast to Naḥmanides, R. Ezra of Gerona maintained that at Sinai Moses beheld but five *sefirot*. See R. Ezra's *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, in *Kitvei Ramban*, 2:488; R. Azriel, *Commentary on the Talmudic Aggadot*, ed. by I. Tishby (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982), p. 7. R. Ezra's view is based on the opinion of R. Ḥelbo, cited in B. Berakhot, 6b, that the Torah was given in five voices. See, however, Ezra's commentary on the aggadot extant in MS Vatican 441, f. 49a, where, after mentioning the passage from Berakhot, he summarises the various positions as follows: 'The ten [voices], and the seven, and the five, everything was one [or perhaps: all these views are identical].' And see the comment of Menaḥem Recanati in his *Commentary to the Torah*, Exod. 20:15, 46d: 'Israel comprehended [at Sinai] only one voice, and Moses comprehended five or seven according to the opinion of the sage, R. Ezra.' It appears that Recanati has confused the view of R. Ezra with that of Naḥmanides. Cf. Ṭodros Abulafia's interpretation of R. Ḥelbo's view in *'Oṣar ha-Kavod ha-Shalem* (Jerusalem, 1970), 4a: 'In the event of revelation only five voices were revealed, corresponding to the last five *sefirot* which were united in the word *'anokhi* in the [event of the] revelation of the Torah . . . All the voices were unified in the last voice.' It is of interest to note, finally, that in a sermon, evidently delivered in the early part of his career, Naḥmanides writes that Israel saw the glory of God at Sinai from behind seven barriers of fire; see *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:135.

24 *Zohar* I, 91a. Cf. II, 146a: 'Whatever Israel saw at that time [i.e. at Sinai] they saw from one light [i.e. *Shekhinah*] which received all the other lights [i.e. the upper *sefirot*], and they desired to see it.'

25 *Zohar* II, 82b. The expression 'as if from behind a wall' is used on several occasions in the *Zohar* to characterize an inferior mode of visualisation. See *Zohar* II, 69b, 130b, 213a; III, 174b; *Zohar Ḥadash* 38a. The very same expression is used by Moses de León in several of his Hebrew theosophic writings. See, e.g., *Sha'ar Yesod ha-Merkavah*, MS Vatican 283, f. 169b: '. . . concerning the upper [celestial creatures] there is no seeing except by a slight contemplation as if from behind a wall.'

26 Employing the terminology of the Talmud (cf. B. Yevamot 49b) the kabbalists maintained that all prophets, with the exception of Moses, beheld the *Shekhinah*, the 'speculum that does not shine;' Moses, by contrast, beheld the divine through the *sefirah of Tif'eret*, i.e. the speculum that shines.' Cf. R. Azriel, *Commentary on the Talmudic Aggadot*, ed. by I. Tishby, pp. 33–34; *Zohar* I, 131a, 170b–171a; II, 23b, 82b, 245a; III, 174a, 198a, 268b; *Zohar Ḥadash* 38b, 42c, 77a; *Tiqqunei Zohar* 18 (32a); *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, p. 16; Isaac of Acre, *Sefer Me'irat 'Einayim*, ed. by A. Goldreich (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 41–43. Cf. *Zohar* II, 82b: 'all prophets vis-à-vis Moses are like a female vis-à-vis a male.' In *Zohar* III, 152b the relationship between Moses and the other prophets is compared to that of the sun to the moon (cf. B. Baba Batra 75a; *Zohar*

Hadash, *Tiqqunim*, 96c); and see ibid. 268b where the relationship is compared to a human and an ape. See, however, Todros Abulafia, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, MS JTS Mic. 1887, ff. 56a–b where it is stated that even Moses only comprehended the speculum that shines, i.e. *Tif'eret*, indirectly through the medium of the two cherubim which, according to this kabbalist, symbolise the ninth and tenth *sefirot*, *Yesod* and *Shekhinah*.

27 Cf. *Zohar* I, 85a, 88b, 91a–b, 183a, 203a, 240b; II, 245a, 247b, 257b; *Tiqqunei Zohar*, §§ 18 (31b), 19 (39b); *Zohar Ḥadash*, *Tiqqunim*, 111b. It should be noted, however, that on occasion the author of the *Zohar*, in concurrence with the accepted kabbalistic symbolism of his time, refers to the two gradations above *Shekhinah*, *Neṣaḥ* and *Hod* as the source of prophetic inspiration. Cf. *Zohar* I, 1b, 183a; II, 104b, 171a, 251b, 257b; III, 35a, 90b. Yet, even in these contexts, it is abundantly clear that the medium of prophetic vision is the *Shekhinah*. See also *Zohar* III, 68a (*Ra'aya' Meheimna'*); *Tiqqunei Zohar*, Introduction (2a–b, 11b, 13a), §§ 21 (49a), 55 (88b), 70 (123b). This is also the basis for the theosophic reinterpretation in the *Zohar* of the rabbinic idea that prophecy is restricted to the land of Israel, the latter being understood symbolically as a reference to *Shekhinah*; see *Zohar* I, 85a, 240b; *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, p. 87. See *Zohar Ḥadash*, *Tiqqunim*, 119c where there is an effort to harmonise the older aggadic tradition concerning the speculum that shines and the speculum that does not shine and the kabbalistic notion that *Neṣaḥ* and *Hod* are the sources of prophetic inspiration: 'The central pillar [*Tif'eret*] is called the "speculum that shines" from the side of *Neṣaḥ* . . . *Shekhinah* . . . is called the "speculum that does not shine" from the side of *Hod*.'

28 *Zohar* I, 88b, 91a.

29 Ibid., 183a. See also *Zohar* II, 186b where *Shekhinah* (the 'lower tabernacle') is described as the 'crystal that reflects all the lights.'

30 Cf. F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), esp. pp. 30–91; Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, II. 41–46. See also C. Sirat, *Les Théories des Visions Surnaturelles dans la Pensée Juive du Moyen-Âge* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), pp. 141–143. A notable exception to the rule is Judah ha-Levi who maintains that the prophets had an 'inner' or spiritual vision, to be distinguished from both rational speculation and sensory imagination, by means of which they were able to see actual spiritual entities such as the angelic hosts, the divine throne, and the glory; see *Cuzari* IV. 3. Cf., however, H. Davidson, 'The Active Intellect in the Cuzari and Hallevi's Theory of Causality,' *Revue des Études Juives* 131 (1972): 389, who writes that the 'spiritual vision' in prophecy 'for Hallevi, unlike Alfarabi [see below], has no objective existence.' On p. 367, n. 4, Davidson remarks that the 'the inner eye was a Sufi commonplace.' It is unclear, however, if he intended to say that ha-Levi was actually influenced by Sufic ideas. Rahman, *op. cit.*, p. 38, draws a distinction between al-Farabi's presentation of prophecy as the imaginative symbolisation of intellectual phenomena and that of ibn Sina on the basis that, while the latter considered these forms to be purely mental with no external correlate, the former maintained that prophetic perceptions do have counterparts in the sensible world. Rahman admits, however, that even for al-Farabi this does not amount to an 'objective' pole inasmuch as the perceptions are not public but rather the private possession of the prophet. Moreover, if one considers the citation from al-Farabi that Rahman himself brings (p. 37), it can be seen that these so-called external counterparts to prophetic imaginative forms are generated from the internal

sensus communis, then transmitted to the external world from which they are again perceived by the prophet and sent back to the imagination by the *sensus communis*.

31 This crucial difference between kabbalistic and rationalistic prophetology is glossed over by Scholem in his remarks in *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, pp. 9–10.

32 See *Guide of the Perplexed* I. 27 (ed. by Pines, p. 58) where Maimonides gives the following reason why Onkelos, the Aramaic translator, could render Gen. 46:2–3 literally: in this context there is no fear of anthropomorphism for 'this passage contains a relation of what was said and not a relation of a story.' By contrast, Exod. 19:20 cannot be rendered literally because that is 'a relation of what took place within matters having existence.' See Naḥmanides' lengthy critique in his commentary to Gen. 46:1 (ed. by Chavel, 1:246–51). In a similar vein in his commentary to Gen. 18:1 Naḥmanides criticised Maimonides' interpretation in the *Guide* II. 42 of angelic revelations as referring allegorically to prophetic vision rather than actual seeing. See Sirat, *Les Théories des Visions Surnaturelles*, pp. 147–149. [It is of interest to note that in his *Sefer ha-Rimmon* Moses de León refers to and upholds Naḥmanides' critique of Maimonides; see E. Wolfson, ed., *The Book of the Pomegranate: Moses de León's Sefer ha-Rimmon* (Brown Judaic Studies 144; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), p. 38 of Introduction and p. 316 of the Hebrew text.] See also *Guide* II. 46 (p. 404), where Maimonides writes that actions which take place in a prophetic vision 'are not real actions, actions that exist for the external senses.' An extreme form of this de-objectification of prophetic states of consciousness can be seen in the following remark of Abraham ibn Ezra in his commentary to Dan. 10:21: 'In prophecy the one who hears is a human being and the one who speaks is a human being.' For the development of this 'subjective' view of prophecy as a mode of self-confrontation in Abraham Abulafia's mystical circle, see Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, p. 142. It should be noted finally that in some cases Maimonides does allow for an 'objective' correlate to prophetic visionary experience, viz., the 'created light' or the *Shekhinah* which God has made especially for this purpose. Cf. *Guide* I. 11 (p. 37), 25 (p. 55), 46 (p. 103), 64 (p. 156). This reflects the Saadianic conception of the 'created glory,' *kavod nivra'*; see A. Altmann, *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), pp. 152–155.

33 One notable exception to this claim, although it does not deal directly with the problem of prophecy or visionary experience, is the statement in *Zohar* I, 103b that God 'is known and comprehended according to what one imagines in one's mind, each one according to one's capability of comprehending with the spirit of wisdom.' This statement would seem to somewhat compromise, at least from the epistemological perspective, the purely 'objective' character of our knowledge of the divine, for it is only through imagination that one has access to or gnosis of God. See the citation from de León's *Sheqel ha-Qodesh* given above, n. 9. The rationalistic interpretation of prophecy as a visual experience of the divine glory in the prophet's imagination is made explicitly by several medieval rabbinic figures, including Hai Gaon (10th century) and Ḥananel ben Ḥushiel (11th century). See *'Oṣar ha-Ge'onim*, ed. by B. Lewin (Jerusalem, 1932) IV, Hagigah, Teshuvot, pp. 14–15; Nathan of Rome, *'Arukh ha-Shalem*, ed. by A. Kohut, 1:14, s.v. *'avnei shayish ṭahor*; E. Urbach, ed.,

'*Arugat ha-Bosem* (Jerusalem: Mequize Nirdamim, 1938), 1: 198–202, and sources cited on 198, n. 1.

34 The link between these two events was made already in tannaitic and amoraic *midrashim*. Indeed several rabbis considered the Sinaitic theophany to be a revelation of God on his throne surrounded by his celestial retinue. However, the precise relation between these midrashic traditions and the esoteric doctrines of *merkavah* mysticism is not clear. Cf. references to Lieberman and Chernus in n. 16. It should be noted as well that in the classical *midrash* the supremacy of vision of the people at the splitting of the sea, even the lowly maid-servant, over Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the other prophets is emphasised; cf. *Mekhilta De-R. Ishamel*, Shirata', 3; B. Sotah 30b.

35 *Zohar* II, 82b. See also ibid. 194a (cited above, n. 13).

36 See n. 24.

37 This accords with the view of R. Ezra of Gerona; see above n. 23. Cf. *Zohar* II, 84b, 90a, 206a. De León affirms the same view in several of his Hebrew theosophic writings; see E. Wolfson, *The Book of the Pomegranate: Moses de León's Sefer ha-Rimmon*, p. 162 (Hebrew section); and the untitled fragment that is extant in MS Munich 47, f. 336a. Concerning this latter work, see G. Scholem, 'Eine unbekannte mystische Schrift des Mose de Leon,' *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 71 (1927): 109–123.

38 See the view of R. Ḥelbo cited in B. Berakhot 6b.

39 The author of the *Zohar*, together with several other 13th century kabbalists, relegated Ezekiel's Chariot-vision to a lower ontological realm below the divine pleroma. To be sure, as is evident from the various kabbalistic commentaries on chapter one of Ezekiel, the particular details of the prophet's vision all have a symbolic correspondence to the upper realm, but, in essence, the throne-world of that vision was concerned with the 'lower chariot,' i.e. the angelic world below the sphere of divine potencies. Cf. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 206–207; Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1971), 1:415–421; A. Farber, 'R. Jacob ha-Kohen's Commentary on Ezekiel's Chariot' (in Hebrew; M.A. thesis, Hebrew University, 1978), pp. 94, n. 3 and 170, n. 1.

40 *Zohar* II, 82a.

41 See above, n. 11.

42 This notion can be traced to Geonic and late medieval midrashic sources. See Saadia, *Commentaire sur le Séfer Yesira*, ed. by M. Lambert (Paris, 1891), p. 22; *idem 'Azaharot le-'Aseret ha-Dibberot*, in A. Jellinek, *Quntres Taryag* (Vienna, 1878), p. 5, n. 14; R. Judah Barzilai, *Commentary on Sefer Yeṣirah*, ed. by S. J. Halberstam (Berlin, 1885), p. 278; *Numbers Rabbah* 13:16, 18:21; *Sefer ha-Bahir*, § 124; R. Ezra, *Commentary on Song of Songs*, *Kitvei Ramban*, 2:521; *Zohar* II, 90a–b, 93b. For other references, see E. Wolfson, *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 58, n. 245 (Introduction).

43 That is, the ten words by which the world was created; cf. M. 'Avot 5:1. For references to the correspondence between the logoi and the commandments, see L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968), 3:104–106, 6:43, n. 237 and 45, n. 243; M. Kasher, *Torah Shelemah* (New York: American Biblical Encyclopedia Society, 1973), 9: 43, n. 72; *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 219, n. 20 (Hebrew section).

44 *Zohar* II, 93b–94a. Cf. I, 91a, II, 82b, and 156b: 'All the secrets of the world, all the commandments and all the upper and lower wisdom are dependent on them [the ten sayings of the Sinaitic revelation], and everything is contained in them. Everything is in the Torah.'

45 On the relation between theosophic exegesis and the Sinatic revelation, see the telling remark in *Zohar Ḥadash*, 93c (*Tiqqunim*): 'The Holy One, blessed be He, inclines the heavens and the heavens of the heavens towards the [mystical] fellowship [of R. Shim'on] in the manner of [the event at] Sinai.'

46 See E. Urbach, 'The Traditions about Merkabah Mysticism in the Tannaitic Period,' in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion presented to Gershom Scholem on his Seventieth-Fifth Birthday* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967), pp. 7–10 (Hebrew section).

47 On gaining a vision of the divine Glory through study of a text, see the legend in *Zohar* I, 56b concerning Abraham and Enoch looking at the book of the generations of mankind given originally by God to Adam. It may be argued, moreover, that, according to the *Zohar*, the mystic must experience some prior spiritual illumination before he can contemplate the *Shekhinah* and see the light of Torah. This point is brought out explicitly in the following interpretation of Dan. 12:3 in *Zohar* I, 15b–16a: '"And the enlightened will shine like the splendor of the firmament" refers to the pillars and supports of that palanquin [a symbolic reference to *Shekhinah* based on Song of Songs 3:9; see, e.g. *Zohar* I, 29a]. "The enlightened" (*ha-maskilim*) are the upper pillars and supports [i.e. the kabbalists] who contemplate (*mistakkelei*) with their understanding the palanquin [*Shekhinah*] to the extent that it is necessary . . . "They will shine," for if they did not shine and were not illuminated, they would not be able to gaze upon and contemplate that palanquin to the extent that is necessary . . . "The splendor" (*zohar*)—that which illuminates the Torah. "The splendor" which shines upon the "heads" of that beast [i.e. *Shekhinah*] and these heads are the enlightened who shine perpetually and who contemplate that firmament and the light that emerges from there which is the light of Torah that shines constantly without pause.' See below, nn. 75–76. Cf. also *Zohar* II, 127a–128a. This section begins with R. Shim'on and three of his comrades sitting under the shade of a tree, and R. Shim'on says: 'We must crown this place with words of Torah.' After a lengthy kabbalistic exposition, R. Shim'on realises that they are sitting 'in the shade of the Holy One, blessed be He, within the palanquin [i.e. the *Shekhinah*],' which they must crown with the 'upper crowns' (i.e. the upper divine grades). In truth, of course, the shade of the tree symbolises the *Shekhinah*, which is the shade of God, and the mystical interpretation of Scripture was only made possible because the comrades found themselves in this place covered by God's light. On the crown, as a symbol for mystical union in the *Zohar* and de León's Hebrew theosophic texts, see E. Wolfson, 'Mystical-Theurgical Dimensions of Prayer in *Sefer ha-Rimmon*,' in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times*, ed. by D. Blumenthal (Brown Judaic Studies 134; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 3:53–55. An elaboration of this theme in its literary and historical context can be found in my forthcoming study, 'Images of the Crown in Ancient and Medieval Jewish Mysticism.'

48 *Zohar* II, 163b. In the continuation of the text the *Zohar* establishes the principle that a person's face reflects the spiritual level to which he is attached. The latter idea is, no doubt, based on earlier physiognomic traditions that have found their way into the *Zohar*, see esp. *Zohar* II, 73a. Hence, the face of the righteous is like the face of the *Shekhinah*. On the history of physiognomic texts in Jewish mysticism and their influence upon the *Zohar*, see G. Scholem, 'Ein Fragment zur Physiognomik und Chiromantik aus der Tradition der spätantiken jüdischen Esoterik,' *Liber amicorum: Studies in Honor of Professor*

Dr. C. J. Bleeker (Leiden: Brill, 1969): 175–193; I. Gruenwald, 'New Fragments from the Physiognomic and Chiromantic Literature' (in Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 40 (1971): 301–319; *idem, Apocalyptic and Merkavah Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1980): pp. 218–224. For a later kabbalistic development of this motif, see L. Fine, 'The Art of Metoposcopy: A Study in Isaac Luria's Charismatic Knowledge,' *AJS Review* 11 (1986): 85–86. That study of Torah illuminates the face of one so involved is stated in ancient Jewish mystical speculation as well. See Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot Literatur*, §§ 288, 678.

49 *Zohar* I, 9a. These three figures in the *Zohar*, R. Shim'on, R. Eleazar, and R. Abba, represent the three pillars which sustain the mystical fellowship (*ḥavrayya*) whose total number is ten. These ten symbolically correspond to the ten divine emanations and the three rabbis just mentioned correspond to the three central emanations, *Ḥesed* (Lovingkindness) on the right, *Gevurah* (Strength) or *Din* (Judgment) on the left, and *Raḥamim* (Mercy) or *Tif'eret* (Splendor) in the center. See Liebes, 'The Messiah of the Zohar' (in Hebrew), in *The Messianic Idea in Israel* (Jersualem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1982), pp. 98–99, 130–132.

50 See M. 'Avot 3:2, 3:6, B. Berakhot 6a; Sanhedrin 39b; Targum to Ps. 82:1; *Midrash Tehillim* on Ps. 105:1, ed. by. S. Buber, 224b; *Deuteronomy Rabbah* 7:2 Cf. E. Urbach, *The Sages Their Concepts and Beliefs*, p. 33.

51 *Zohar* I, 135b, 164a, 245a; II, 94b, 134b (*Ra'aya' Meheimna'*), 149a, 155b, 188b; III, 22a, 35a, 60b, 61a, 213a, 268a–b, 298a; *Zohar Ḥadash*, 28b, 95a (*Midrash ha-Ne'elam*). See also II, 149a: 'R. Isaac said, One day I went with [R. Shim'on] on the road and he opened his mouth in [explication of the] Torah. I saw a pillar of cloud fixed from above to below and one splendour shone within that pillar.' And II, 209a where R. Abba says: 'I have seen one light that divided into three lights . . .I have surely seen the *Shekhinah* . . . and the three lights that I saw are you' [i.e. three members of the mystical fellowship engaged in kabbalistic exegesis]. For other references, see I. Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 2:770, n. 43.

52 *Zohar* III, 35a.

53 *Zohar* III, 268b. Cf. ibid., 61a, where it says not only that the *Shekhinah* is never removed from the scholars occupied in Torah study, but also that the very image of these scholars is inscribed before God and every day God gazes upon these images and derives pleasure.

54 See the comment of the kabbalist R. Ḥayyim Joseph David Azulai (1724–1806) *ad loc.*: 'It is possible that the [intent here is that the] oral Torah corresponds to *Malkhut* [i.e. *Shekhinah*] which is called *hekhal* (palace) whose numerical value is equal to that of *'Adonai* [one of the standard names for *Shekhinah*]. And this is [the meaning of] what is said, "Whoever is engaged in Torah," for the word "engaged" (*'ishtaddel*) for the most part connotes that one is occupied in detailed study (*she-'oseq be-'iyyun*) of the oral Torah, and by means of this study one causes the unity of the Holy One, blessed be He, and the *Shekhinah*. Therefore one is "engaged in the palace of the Holy One, blessed be He, "to unify her with her beloved.' See below, nn. 71, 96.

55 *Zohar* II, 200a. On the identification of *Shekhinah* and Torah, cf. Naḥmanides' commentary to Gen. 1:1 (ed. by Chavel, 1:11) and Deut. 33:1 (2:491).

56 *Zohar Ḥadash*, 29a.

57 *Zohar* III, 22a.

58 B. Ketuvot 62b.

59 See *Zohar* I, 50a; II, 63b, 89a; III, 49b, 78a, 143a (*'Idra' Rabba'*). Cf. E. Ginsburg, 'The Sabbath in Classical Kabbalah' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1984), pp. 147–149. The model here again is the aggadic view of Moses who separated permanently from his wife after receiving the Torah on Mount Sinai. See Y. Liebes, 'The Messiah of the Zohar,' p. 122.

60 Cf. *Zohar* I, 72a, 92b, 115b; II, 200a; *Zohar Ḥadash*, 28a.

61 This is substantiated in parts of the *Zohar* by means of the numerical equivalence between *raz*, i.e. mystery, and *'or*, i.e. light. Insofar as both words equal 207, it may be said that one who knows the mystery of the text can see the light hidden therein. Cf. *Zohar* I, 140a (*Midrash ha-Ne'elam*); III, 28b (*Ra'aya' Meheimna'*); *Zohar Ḥadash*, 8d (*Midrash ha-Ne'elam*), 94b (*Tiqqunim*); *Tiqqunei Zohar* 19 (39b). And see *Zohar* II, 193b where R. Shim'on is said to have revealed the lights of Torah hitherto hidden in the darkness. See Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, p. 63. On the kabbalistic notion of the letters as configurations of divine light, see Scholem, 'The Name of God and the Linguistic Theory of the Kabbalah', *Diogenes* 80 (1972): 161–72. See also the citation from the *Zohar* given below, n. 80. In subsequent Hasidic literature a technical meditative technique was developed centred on the cleaving of one's thought to the infinite divine light contained in the letters of the Torah and those of prayer. See J. Weiss, 'Torah Study in Early Hasidism,' *Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, ed. by D. Goldstein (Oxford, 1985), pp. 56–68. The numerical equivalence (*gematria*) of light, *'or*, and mystery, *raz*, is also employed by a contemporary of the author of *Zohar*, Abraham Abulafia (1240–1291), the noted ecstatic-prophetic kabbalist. See, e.g. *'Oṣar 'Eden Ganuz*, MS Oxford Bodleian 1580, f. 8b. On the connection between the luminous essence of the letters and the mysteries of the Torah, see *idem*, *Sefer ha-Ḥesheq*, MS JTS Mic. 1801, ff. 29a–b. On the vision of letters in Abulafia's writings, see M. Idel, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), pp. 100–105. In the final analysis, the kabbalistic notion that words of Scripture are the concretisation of divine light represents a version of the Neoplatonic conception of God's accommodating self-revelation, i.e. the divine light is concealed in a variety of veils so that human beings can perceive it. See the classical formulation of this by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Divine Names* 1, 592B.21f., and *The Celestial Hierarchy* 1, 120B.7–121A.1: 121BC. 16–27. The latter source is cited and discussed by P. Rorem, 'The Uplifting Spirituality of Pseudo-Dinoysius,' in *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*, ed. by B. McGinn, J. Meyendorff, and J. Leclercq (New York: Crossroad, 1987), p. 134. The influence of Pseudo-Dionysius' symbolic reading of the literal text on twelfth-century Christian exegetes, particularly the Victorines, has been noted by B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), p. 370. For an example of a possible Jewish Neoplatonic source that may have influenced the Spanish kabbalists on this score, see the statement of Abraham bar Ḥiyya cited in Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, p. 63. The identification of Torah (or Wisdom) and light is also prevalent in the writings of the Gerona school; see, e.g., R. Azriel, *Commentary on the Talmudic Aggadot*, pp. 83, 100, 110–111. For the Neoplatonic influence in the case of Azriel, see A. Altmann, 'Isaac Israeli's "Chapter on the Elements" (MS. Mantua)'. *Journal of Jewish Studies* 7 (1956): 31–57; *Isaac Israeli A Neoplatonic Philosopher of the Early Tenth Century*, translated and ed. by A. Altmann and S. M. Stern (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 130–132.

On the image of the literal sense as a cloak that hides the divine light, see below, nn. 63, 90.

62 *Zohar* III, 202a. In that context the different lights that shine in each word of Torah correspond to the various types of meaning, to wit, the literal or contextual, the homiletical, the allegorical, the mystical, and the legalistic. See n. 65.

63 Cf. *Zohar* III, 152a. On the theme of the garments of Torah, see Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 2:369; and, most recently, Dorit Cohen-Alloro, *The Secret of the Garment in the Zohar* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1987), pp. 45–49.

64 *Mishkan ha-'Edut*, MS Berlin Or. Quat. 833, f. 1b. See Cohen-Alloro, *The Secret of the Garment in the Zohar*, p.47.

65 By the latter part of the 13th century, kabbalists generally distinguished between four levels of interpretation: the literal, homiletical, allegorical, and mystical. See Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, pp. 53–61; A Van Der Heide, 'Pardes: Methodological Reflections on the Theory of the Four Senses', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 34 (1983): 147–59.

66 Cf. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, p. 39, and references given therein, n. 3. The thematic has also been discussed by I. Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 2:365–366, and more extensively by M. Idel, 'The Concept of Torah in the Hekhalot and its Transformation in the Kabbalah,' pp. 49–58.

67 *Zohar* II, 60a. Cf. also the explicit statements of Joseph Hamadan and Menaḥem Recanati cited in Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*. p. 44. See also the statement of Judah Ḥayyat in his commentary to the anonymous *Ma'arekhet ha-'Elohut* (Jerusalem, 1963), 93a: 'The Torah is the image (*demuto*) of the Holy One, blessed be He, and from its perspective man can compare the form, which is the soul, to its creator.' The expression 'compare the form to its creator,' with a different meaning, is found in earlier rabbinic sources; see, e.g., *Genesis Rabbah* 24:1 (ed. by Theodor-Albeck, p. 230), 27:1 (p. 256).

68 Ibid., 60b.

69 Cf. *Sefer Ta'amei ha-Miṣwot*, ed. by M. Meier (Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1974), p. 58: 'Therefore the Torah is called by this name for it instructs [us] about the pattern of the Holy One, blessed be He . . . the Torah, as it were, is the shadow of the Holy One, blessed be He . . . and inasmuch as the Torah is the form of God He commanded us to study it so that we may know the pattern of the upper form [i.e. the *sefirot*]. As some kabbalists [cf. Naḥmanides *ad loc*.] said concerning the verse, "Cursed be he who does not raise up the words of this Torah" (Deut. 27:26), is there a Torah that falls? This is rather a warning to the cantor to show the writing of the Torah scroll to the community so that they will see the pattern of the upper form. How much more so [is it incumbent] to study the Torah so that one may see the supernal mysteries and see the actual Glory of the Holy One, blessed be He. All the time that one studies the Torah one is actually sitting in the shadow of the Holy One, blessed be He.' See parallels in Joseph Hamdan, *Sefer Tashak*, ed. by J. Zwelling (Ph.D., Brandeis University, 1975), pp. 72, 88, and esp. 93. The text from Hamadan has been discussed by Idel, 'The Concept of Torah in the Hekhalot and its Transformation in the Kabbalah,' pp. 64–65. See also the citation from a late 13th century kabbalistic text, *Sefer ha-Yiḥud*, translated and discussed by Idel, 'Infinities of Torah in Kabbalah.' p. 145.

70 B. Baba Batra 12s.

71 Concerning this expression, see Liebes, *Sections of a Zohar Lexicon* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1982), pp. 379–380, n. 94.

72 *Zohar* III, 35a. See above, n. 27.

73 Ibid. There is another nuance to this text, viz., the correspondence of the three parts of the biblical canon to three gradations in the divine world: Torah corresponds to *Tif'eret*, Prophets to *Neṣaḥ* and *Hod*, and the Writings to *Shekhinah*. Cf. the parallel in E. Wolfson, *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 20 (Hebrew section). This symbolic correspondence predates the Zoharic theosophy. See, e.g., Azriel's *Commentary on the Talmudic Aggadot*, ed. by Tishby, pp. 48–49; Ṭodros Abulafia, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, MS JTS Mic. 1887, f. 58b.

74 Cf., e.g., *Zohar* I, 189b–190a; II, 61b, 95a; III, 22a, 36a, 73a, 112a, 153a (*Piqqudin*); II, 202a; *Zohar Ḥadash'*, 70d, and the passage cited at n. 85. In *Zohar Ḥadash*, *Tiqqunim*, 97c, to be 'engaged in Torah study' is given the particular theurgic meaning of uniting the feminine and masculine potencies of God (see above, n. 54). To be sure, the expression, *le-'ishtaddel be-'oraita'*, can also have a less technical meaning of simply being occupied with Torah study. See, e.g. *Zohar Hadash, Ruth*, 80d–81a (*Midrash ha-Ne'elam*); *Zohar* I, 132b, 168a, 184b, 242b; II, 27a, 46a, 83b, 161a–b; III, 98b.

75 Cf. *Zohar* III, 132b (*'Idra' Rabba'*) where R. Shim'on says: 'I have seen now what no man has seen since Moses ascended the second time to Mount Sinai, for I have seen the Faces [the *sefirot*] illuminated as the light of the bright sun . . . Moreover, I have known that my face is illuminated, but Moses did not know and did not consider.' And cf. ibid., 144a (*'Idra' Rabba'*) where R. Shim'on thus comments on the premature death of three of the comrades in the Great Assembly: 'Perhaps, God forfend, a decree of punishment has been given to us for by our hands that which was not revealed since Moses stood on Mount Sinai has been revealed.' It is clear that the author conceived of the contents of the *'Idra' Rabba'* as another Sinaitic revelation. See Liebes, 'The Messiah of the Zohar' pp. 90, n. 12, 134, 208–215. On the parallel theurgical powers of R. Shim'on and Moses to perform miracles, see esp. *Zohar* II, 149a. On the Zohar's image of R. Shim'on as the figure of Moses *redivivus* and its influence in subsequent kabbalistic literature, see A. Green, 'The *Zaddiq* as *Axis Mundi* in Later Judaism,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 45 (1977): 335–337; Liebes, 'The Messiah of the Zohar,' pp. 90, n. 12, 105–107, 112.

76 *Zohar* II, 23a. See below, n. 86.

77 Cf. *Zohar* II, 2a where the enlightened, *maskilim*, are identified specifically as 'those who are occupied with the mystery of wisdom.' Cf. also *Zohar Ḥadash* 105a (*Matnitin*), 105c, 106b. And see *Tiqqunei Zohar*. Introduction (17a) [parallel in *Zohar Ḥadash, Tiqqunim*, 93d] where the *maskilim* of Dan. 12:3 are interpreted explicitly as a reference to R. Shim'on and his circle. See the passage discussed above at n. 47. It should be noted that the term *maskilim* was used in medieval Hebrew literature both by the rationalists and the mystics, the former in order to designate those who adhered to a philosophical ideology and the latter in order to name esotericists and initiates of kabbalah. The usage thus clearly predates the generation of the *Zohar*. See Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, p. 224.

78 M. Ḥagigah 2:1. For a discussion of this mishnaic statement, and other rabbinic parallels, see D. Halperin, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1980), pp. 30ff.

79 Cf. *Zohar Ḥadash*, *Tiqqunim*, 94b. See, however, *Zohar* I, 100a (*Sitrei Torah*) [parallel in *Zohar Ḥadash*, 104b], and II, 2a, where the word *zohar* in Dan. 12:3 is interpreted as a reference to *Yesod*. See following note.

80 See above n. 75. Is there an allusion here to the authorship of the *Zohar*? See the suggestive remark of Daniel Matt, *Zohar, the Book of Enlightenment* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), p. 243. Cf. the citation from *Zohar Ḥadash, Tiqqunim*, 94b, below at n. 109. And cf. *Zohar* III, 79b, where Numbers 12:8, the scriptural account of Mosaic prophecy, is applied to R. Shim'on bar Yoḥai. Concerning the latter reference, see Liebes, 'The Messiah in the Zohar,' p. 144. Perhaps one should read the passage in the following way: the *maskilim* shine like the sky of Moses, which is to say that they reflect the light of *Tif'eret*, and therefore are on the level of *Shekhinah*. Indeed, in several places in the *Zohar* it is emphasised that the mystic sage shines with the splendour of the *Shekhinah*; cf. *Zohar* I, 9a, 135b; III, 268b. See also *Mishkan ha-'Edut*, f. 36a, and de León's *Shushan 'Edut*, ed. by G. Scholem, *Qovez 'al Yad*, n.s. 8 (1976): 341, where it seems that the splendour (*zohar*) in Dan. 12:3 is interpreted as a reference to *Shekhinah*. See also *The Book of the Pomegranate*, pp. 159, 401 (Hebrew section).

81 Cf. Abraham Abulafia's description of kabbalists as 'prophets for themselves' discussed by M. Idel, 'The Writings of Abraham Abulafia and his Teaching' [in Hebrew] (Ph.D. dissertation: Hebrew University, 1976), 2:274–275. It would seem that Scholem's hard and fast distinction between prophetic revelation and mystical experience is a product of his own systematic categorisation of the three stages in the historical development of religion wherein the mythical precedes the prophetic which in turn precedes the mystical, rather than an accurate account of the sources themselves. Cf. *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 7–9; *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, pp. 9–11.

82 The radicalness of these claims vis-à-vis classical rabbinic dogma has been noted by D. Blumenthal, *Understanding Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Ktav, 1978), 1:135–136.

83 Cf. *Midrash Mishle*, ed. by Buber (Vilna, 1893), 10, 33b. Part of the passage has been translated by Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, p. 71, who duly noted the connection of this text to merkavah mysticism.

84 *Zohar Ḥadash*, 105a (*Matnitin*).

85 Ibid., 106b.

86 See Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 1:146, interpreting the Zoharic passage cited above at n. 76. Cf. *Zohar* II, 179b: 'The combination of the letters of the holy names [of God] as the letters themselves cause the *upper secrets* to be *seen*, just as the letters themselves of the holy Name [the Tetragrammaton] cause the upper, holy secrets to be seen through them' (my emphasis). See also the lengthy discussion on letter-combination in *Zohar* III, 2a–3b. On the connection between letter-combination and visionary experience in the school of Abulafia, see Idel, 'The Writings of Abraham Abulafia and his Teaching,' 2: 294–298; and *idem*, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia*, pp. 80–81. An interesting epistemological clash is generated by the emphasis on the visionary component of mystical experience, on the one hand, and the adherence to the oral nature of kabbalah, on the other, the latter being transmitted primarily through hearing and not sight. See, in particular, the following comment of R. Isaac of Acre in *Sefer Me'irat 'Einayim*, ed. by A. Goldreich, p. 11 (of critical text): 'The secrets of Torah are pleasant and sweeter than honey and they illuminate the intellective soul (*ha-me'irim nefesh ha-sekhel*). And for whom are they pleasant? To those who hear them (*le-shom'im*), that is to say, to the kabbalists (*la-mequbbalim*), as we always say, "they said it from the

tradition" (*mi-pi ha-shemu'ah*), which is from the kabbalah.' See, however, ibid., p. 101, where R. Isaac distinguishes between three cognitive levels: hearing (*shemi'ah*) which is correlated with the tenth emanation, *Shekhinah*, knowledge (*yedi'ah*) correlated with the sixth emanation. *Tif'eret*, and vision (*re'iyah*) correlated with the third emanation, *Binah*. From this correlation of epistemological states with ontological grades it is clear that vision is accorded the highest status. Other kabbalists, however, emphasised the epistemological supremacy of the auditory mode over the visual. Cf. the following comment of R. Azriel of Gerona cited in Scholem, 'Qabbalot R. Ya'aqov, we-R. Yiṣḥaq,' *Madda'ei ha-yahadut* 2 (1927): 233: 'And from the power of That which is hidden (*Koaḥ ha-nistar*) He goes out in That which is heard (*ba-nishma'*) and from That which is heard to That which is seen (*ba-nir'eh*).' See Scholem's n. 2, *ad loc*. See Jacob ben Sheshet, *Meshiv Devarim Nekhoḥim*, p. 189: 'The faculty of hearing is more subtle than that of sight;' Baḥya ben Asher, *Commentary on the Torah*, Exod. 4:11, p. 37: 'The light [of vision] expands the understanding, but the sense of hearing is much greater . . . for a greater advantage comes to a person from the ear than the eye . . . The ear is a more honourable limb than the eye . . . This matter can only be explained by the kabbalah, for vision (*ha-re'iyah*) is from the power of the *heh* [i.e. the feminine *Shekhinah*] and hearing (*ha-shemi'ah*) is from the power of the *waw* [i.e. the masculine *Tif'eret*].' See also *Zohar* II, 23b where on the basis of Exod. 6:3, 'I *appeared* to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai, but I did not make myself *known* to them by the explicit name [the Tetragrammaton],' the author of *Zohar* distinguishes between two levels of experience: knowledge (*yedi'ah*) and vision (*re'iyah*). The former, mystical gnosis, was attained only by Moses and corresponds to the *sefirah* of *Tif'eret*, whereas the latter was attained by the patriarchs and corresponds to the *Shekhinah*. Nevertheless, it is clear from the whole context that even the former is visual in nature for Moses was said to have had a vision of the upper hidden colours, whereas the patriarchs had a vision of the lower revealed colours as reflected in the *Shekhinah*; see text cited above, n. 76. Moreover, the *Zohar* sets out a specific technique for achieving the visionary experience that he calls knowledge, viz. the rotation of the closed eye which creates an array of colours said to symbolise the upper hidden colours; see also *Zohar* I, 18b, 97a (*Sitrei Torah*); II, 43b. Cf. de León's comment in *Sha'ar Yesod ha-Merkavah*, MS Vatican 283, f. 170a, on the verse. 'As I gazed on the creatures' (Ezek. 1:15): '"As I gazed," a limited vision (*re'iyah mu'eṭet*), for permission has not been granted to the eye to see [the upper creatures, i.e. the three central *sefirot*]. Thus the vision was deficient.' From this passage we see again that mystical gnosis of the upper gradations—here called the creatures—is visual in nature, even though de León attempts to limit that vision in significant ways. The issues that I am raising here touch upon the larger question of the respective value assigned to visual and auditory thinking in medieval Jewish thought (philosophical and mystical), a comprehensive treatment of which I hope to give in my forthcoming monograph referred to above in n. 13. For a similar phenomenological conflict between the visual and auditory modes in the 4th century Christian controversy over the nature of the Trinity, see D. Chidester, 'Word against Light: Perception and Conflict of Symbols,' *The Journal of Religion* 65 (1985): 46–62.

87 See above, n. 7.

88 See above, n. 61.

89 *Zohar* II, 98b.

90 In *Zohar* III, 152a, four levels are distinguished: the body which corresponds to the legal portions of Scripture, the garment which corresponds to the narrative portions, the soul which corresponds to the esoteric truths concealed in the text, and the soul of souls which corresponds to an even more esoteric dimension. The latter is revealed only in the Messianic age. See *Zohar* I, 103b; III, 164b: *Zohar Ḥadash, Tiqqunim*, 96c; and cf. the detailed study of Y. Liebes, 'The Messiah in the Zohar' (see n. 49). The idea that God must clothe the word of Torah is related to another Zoharic idea, based on earlier kabbalistic sources including Naḥmanides, that the angels must put on an earthly garment upon their descent to this world. On this theme and citation of all the relevant sources, see Cohen-Alloro, *The Secret of the Garment in the Zohar*, pp. 26–44. For the possible Neoplatonic source for this image, see above, n. 61. On the common image of the literal sense of the text as a cloak of concealment which must be penetrated, see the remark of Claudius of Turin cited and analysed in B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, pp. 1–2.

91 This image may have been derived from Ezek. 10:12 where the wheels of the chariot are described as being 'covered all over with eyes.' I am unaware of any previous rabbinic source which applies this image to describe the sage. See, however, Philo, *Questiones et Solutiones in Exodum*, III, 43 (in Loeb ed., p. 236) where it is said that it is necessary for the soul 'to be all eyes' so that it may 'receive lightning-flashes (of illumination), having God as its teacher and leader in obtaining knowledge of things and attaining to their causes.' This text is related to a theme that Philo develops in a number of contexts concerning God's implanting (*enommatoō*) eyes in an individual so that he will be able to see God. See the sources cited and discussed in G. Delling. 'The "One Who Sees God" in Philo', in *Nourished With Peace: Studies in Hellenistic Judaism in Memory of Samuel Sandmel*, ed. by F. Greenspahn, E. Hilgert, and B. Mack (Chico: Scholars Press, 1984), pp. 33–34.

92 This possible dependence was noted already by Tishby. See *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 2: 370, n. 50; D. Matt, *Zohar, The Book of Enlightenment*, pp. 30–31.

93 The imagery is based, no doubt, on *Tanḥuma*, Peqqudei, 4, where the Torah is likened to a king's daughter hidden behind seven chambers in a palace. Cf. F. Talmage, 'Apples of Gold: The Inner Meaning of Sacred Texts in Medieval Judaism,' *Jewish Spirituality: From the Bible Through the Middle Ages* (New York: Crossroad, 1986), pp. 316–318. On this image of the Torah, see reference given below, n. 100. See also *Sefer ha-Bahir* § 196 (cf. Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, pp. 170–171) as well as the suggestive characterization of the Torah in *Zohar* III, 35b–36a: 'When a person comes to be united with the Torah she is open to receive him and to join him. But when a person closes his eyes from her and goes another way, she is closed from another side.' And cf. the citation from de León's *Mishkan ha-'Edut* given above, n. 14.

94 Cf. Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 2:370–371.

95 For the possible etymological derivation of this term, see F. Talmage, 'The Term "Haggadah" in the Parable of the Beloved in the Palace in the Zohar' (in Hebrew), *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 4 (1985/86): 271–273. Talmage traces the use of the term *haggadah* for allegorical meaning to the old Spanish word, *razonamiento*, which means both 'discourse' or 'speech' and 'reasoning' or 'rationication.' The same expression is used by Naḥmanides in his report of the famous disputation in Barcelona in 1263 with the Friar Pablo

(or Paul) Christiani. See the version of this report in *Kitvei Ramban*, ed. by Chavel, 1:308. The bibliography on this disputation is extensive; see the references given in J. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 110–111, n. 16. The crucial passage is translated and discussed by Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp. 118–119.

96 See references above, n. 65, and see below, n. 104.

97 The derivation of this symbolism consists in the fact that *Yesod* corresponds to the male sex organ and the rainbow is a phallic symbol. Already in rabbinic literature, the word *qeshet* (which is the word for rainbow as well) euphemistically signifies the phallus; see e.g. B. Soṭah 36b; Sanhedrin 92a. On the kabbalistic symbolism, see G. Scholem, 'Colours and Their Symbolism in Jewish Tradition and Mysticism,' *Diogenes* 108 (1979): 89–90; 109 (1980): 69–71. See, however, Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 1:64, who explains that the rainbow in this context is a symbol for *Shekhinah*, and the cloud the garment in which she is clothed. See also Matt, *Zohar, the Book of Enlightenment*, p. 251, and Cohen-Alloro, *The Secret of the Garment in the Zohar*, p. 77, who follow this line of interpretation. The rainbow as a symbol for the divine Presence is also rabbinic in origin; see B. Ḥagigah 16a (based on Ezekiel 1:28).

98 Cf. *Zohar* II, 229a, and see Naḥmanides' commentary on Ex. 24:1, p. 448. In several places in the *Zohar* the garment represents the means through which the soul cleaves to and comprehends God. See *Zohar* 1:38b, 75b–76a; 2:55a; 3:69a, 214a; Cohen-Alloro. *The Secret of the Garment in the Zohar*, pp. 68–74. Another related idea in the *Zohar* is that the righteous one below who performs certain divine commandments is clothed in the garment of the *Shekhinah*; see Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 2:429–44.

99 Cf. M. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, pp. 227–228. In *Mishkan ha-'Edut*, f. 36a, de León notes just the opposite, i.e. as the righteous one approaches the *Shekhinah* she is the one that puts on a garment. See Cohen-Alloro, *op. cit.*, p. 16, n. 1.

100 Cf. *Zohar Ḥadash*, 42a: 'Moses needed forty days to learn the Oral Torah, for that gradation is called "Forty." Thus it says, "And [Moses] was there forty days and forty nights" (Ex. 34:28). The written Torah [i.e. *Tif'eret*] and the oral Torah [i.e. *Shekhinah*] were united. Therefore he had to specify and mention "forty days" [corresponding to *Tif'eret*] and "forty nights" [corresponding to *Shekhinah*].' See references above, n. 21. See also *Zohar Ḥadash*, 72d–73a, where Moses' relationship to *Shekhinah* (i.e. the oral Torah symbolised by the name *'Elohim*) is said to be consummated only when he receives the Ineffable Name (i.e. *YHWH*, or the written Torah). The image of Moses as the husband of Torah is made in an earlier aggadic source, *Midrash 'Alpha' Beitot*, where it is, interestingly enough, connected with his exegetical prowess. See S. Wertheimer, ed., *Battei Midrashot* (Jerusalem, 1980), 2:424: 'Afterward [God] brought out the soul of Moses from underneath his throne who would in the future explain the Torah in seventy languages. God showed him to the Torah and said, "My daughter [see above, n. 93], take joy and be gladden by this Moses, my servant, for he will be your groom and your master. He will be the one to receive you and to explain your words to the sixty myriad of Israel.'

101 On this theme, see Liebes, 'The Messiah of the Zohar,' pp. 135–145: and my study 'Circumcision, Vision of God, and Textual Interpretation: From Midrashic Trope to Mystical Symbol,' *History of Religions* 27 (1987): 189–215. See also the citation given above at n. 56. Cf. *Tiqqunei Zohar* § 19 (38a) where the 'upper waters' are identified as the written Torah, the 'lower waters' as the

oral Torah, and the 'thread' that is between them (cf. B. Ḥagigah 15a) with *Yesod* which is 'the secret of the Torah' and 'the foundation and root' of both. And see the explanation of R. Elijah ben Solomon, the Gaon of Vilna, *ad loc.* 'Kabbalah is the union of the two *torot*, for it brings the oral secrets [as they are] in Scripture.' See also the comment of R. Ḥayyim Joseph David Azulai cited above, n. 54.

102 *Zohar* III, 22a.

103 See also *Zohar* I, 4a, where those who study Torah the night before Pentecost are said to prepare the *Shekhinah* for her wedding to *Tif'eret*, i.e. the oral Torah and the written Torah. In this respect, too, the one who studies Torah is in the posture of *Yesod* in that he acts as a conduit connecting the masculine and feminine potencies. On this passage, see Liebes, 'The Messiah of the Zohar,' pp. 92–93. The understanding of kabbalistic study as a means to unite the masculine and feminine aspects of God is a common motif in any number of kabbalistic sources. I will cite one striking example from Naphtali Bacharach, *'Emeq ha-Melekh* (Amsterdam, 1653), 144c: 'R. Shim'on ben Yoḥai was the righteous one, foundation of the world, and by means of his studying this wisdom [i.e. kabbalah] with which he was occupied as is appropriate, he united *Ze'eir 'Anpin* [i.e. the masculine aspect of God] and his female [i.e. *Shekhinah*] . . . And this is the secret of all those who write mystical books: they repair the world of action by the secret of writing these esoteric truths. And the esoteric truth itself unites *Ze'eir 'Anpin* with his feminine counterpart in the most inward unity.'

104 See Liebes, 'The Messiah of the Zohar', pp. 198–203. That *Shekhinah* is the locus of exegetical activity is emphasised in *Tiqqunei Zohar* (*Zohar Ḥadash*, 102d) by the claim that *Shekhinah* is called *pardes de-'oraita'*, the 'paradise (or orchard) of Torah,' for this gradation comprises four levels of interpretation: *peshaṭ*, *re'iyah*, *derashah*, and *sod*. Cf. Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 2:376; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, p. 58. See above, n. 96.

105 Cf. *Zohar* I, 236b; II, 22b, 238b. In *Zohar* I, 138b, the term is applied to Jacob who symbolically corresponds to the same gradation as Moses, viz. *Tif'eret*, the consort of *Shekhinah*. On the difference between the level of Moses and that of Jacob, see *Zohar* I, 21b, and the Hebrew parallel in de León's untitled fragment extant in MS Munich 47, ff. 336a–b (see above, n. 37).

106 Cf. *Zohar* II, 134b

107 Cf. *Zohar* II, 238b. This is based, of course, on the biblical appelation, *'ish 'Elohim*, which is applied to Moses; see, e.g. Deut. 33:1. For the other biblical personalities so named, cf. *Sifre Deuteronomy*, piska 342, ed. by Finlestein, p. 393; *'Avot De-R. Natan*, ed. by S. Schechter (Vienna, 1887), version B. ch. 37 (pp. 95–96); Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 6: 167, n. 965. The kabbalistic interpretation of the expression is alluded to in Naḥmanides' commentary to Deut. 33:1, ed. by Chavel, 2:491. Cf. M. Idel, Métaphores et Pratiques Sexuelles dans la Cabale," in *Lettre sur la Sainte', étude préliminaire traduction de l' herbréu et commentaires* par Charles Mopsik (Paris, 1986), p. 345.

108 On the Zoharic conception of Moses' mythical unification with *Shekhinah*, see the sources cited and discussed by Liebes, *Sections of the Zohar Lexicon*, pp. 182–84.

109 *Zohar Ḥadash*, *Tiqqunim* 94b. See *ibid.*, 96b, and above, n. 80. See also *Tiqqunei Zohar* 69, 111b where it is said that Moses will come at the end of days to reveal the meaning of the *Zohar*. As A. Green, '*Zaddiq* as *Axis Mundi*' p. 343,

n. 10, correctly observes, this already assumes an identification of the Zoharic R. Shim'on and Moses (see above, n. 75).

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JOSEPH SMITH'S 1823 VISION: UNCOVERING THE ANGEL MESSAGE

G. St John Stott

Joseph Smith, Jr claimed to have seen an angel in the autumn of 1823, and to have learned from that angel of the *Book of Mormon*. He further claimed that the day after his vision he found the *Book of Mormon* plates. An analysis of Smith's vision narratives—the earliest of which dates to 1832—shows that such claims were anachronistic. Smith could not have found the plates that year. Possibly Smith invented the vision in order to gain status in his family; more probably, however, there was a vision (hallucination) which Smith interpreted differently as time passed and he saw its significance for his career as prophet and 'translator'.

It was during the night of 21–22 September 1823, Joseph Smith, Jr would explain, that he had first learned of the *Book of Mormon* and his calling to translate it. An angel had appeared to him three times that night to tell him of a history of the ancestors of the American Indian engraven, late in the fourth century A.D., in a 'reformed Egyptian' script on plates of gold, and hidden in a hill near his home in Manchester, Ontario County, New York.[1]

Smith's story did not stop there, of course: it went on to tell how he took the plates from their hiding place in 1827, and translated their engravings 'by the gift and power of God', 1828–29. That is its problem. It is one thing to have such a vision: quite another to insist that its promises have been fulfilled—and it is not surprising that for more than a century and a half, controversialists have argued as to whether or not Smith was telling the truth. If, for most Latter-day Saints, it has seemed self-evident that he was, and 'the precious angel message' has been a cause of celebration,[2] for most others doubt has seemed to be a more appropriate response than faith. After all there is little evidence for the use of Egyptian writing systems in the New World; even less for a Mesoamerican practice of engraving histories on metal plates. As for the idea of a miraculous translation—it is so unprecedented that those who are not LDS are hard put not to dismiss Smith's claims as fraudulent.

Such reactions, though understandable, are perhaps premature. Smith laid claim to three things: a vision, a find (the plates), and a translation; and however bizarre his story might appear taken as a whole, each element is credible if it is taken separately. To be sure, it could be that we should

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not believe anything that Smith said; but since his translation grew out of his activities as a scryer, it is quite possible that even if there were no plates to handle and hold, Smith, confident in his gifts of seership, really thought that he could translate scripture from ancient America.[3] It is also not impossible that there could have been plates—or, if not plates, some trouvaille which put Smith in mind of a lost Indian history[4]—which Smith tried to translate using the seer stone which he had previously used to scry.[5] Of course, even so, there need not have been a vision in 1823. Both the find and the translation could as easily have been made without as with one. And yet it too is not prima facie an impossibility. One can hardly say that Smith could not have seen a vision of an angel of God. Smith's religious life seems to have begun in 1820 with a saving vision of Christ;[6] that being so, there is no good reason to doubt that he saw an angel in 1823.

This does not mean that Smith's story should be accepted as it stands, without question. His 'translation' was not a translation in the normal sense of the word.[7] His find was not a cache of plates—or at least, not the plates that he would describe.[8] And his vision, as we shall see, was quite different from what he would come to affirm that it was.

The earliest account we have of the vision, in Smith's own words, dates from 1832. 'When I was seventeen years of age', Smith then reported (he was born 23 December 1805),

> I called . . . upon the Lord and he showed unto me a heavenly vision for behold an angel of the Lord came and stood before me and it was by night and he called me by name and he said that the Lord had forgiven me my sins and he revealed unto me that in the Town of Manchester Ontario County N.Y. there was plates of gold upon which there was engravings which was engraven by Maroni & his fathers the servants of the living God in ancient days and deposited by the commandments of God and kept by the power thereof and that I should go and get them and he revealed unto me many things concerning the inhabitants of . . . the earth which since have been revealed in commandments and revelations.[9]

More extensive accounts form part of the history Smith began to dictate in 1838, and the 'sketch of the rise, progress, persecution and faith of the Latter-day Saints' he prepared in 1842 for John Wentworth, the editor and owner of the *Chicago Democrat*. Smith also described the vision to one of his visitors in 1835, and notes were taken at the time of what he said.[10]

At first glace these accounts seem to be broadly consistent. The revelation of 'many things concerning the inhabitants of . . . the earth' (in the 1832 account) becomes in 1838 the announcement that certain Biblical prophecies were about to be fulfilled: prophecies in Isaiah 11, Joel 2, Acts 3, and Malachi 2 and 4. And in 1842, even though the prophecies themselves go unmentioned, their meaning seems to be caught up in the angel's promises that 'the preparatory work for the second coming of the Messiah was speedily to commence', the fullness of the gospel was to be preached 'in power', and Smith was to be 'an instrument in the hands of God to bring about some of his purposes in this glorious dispensation'. It is no wonder, therefore, that Richard L. Anderson would defend Smith as a 'convincing witness': 'one who is sure of his observations, and who reports them consistently, with [the] factual detail to be expected from one who saw and heard for himself.'[11]

A closer look at Smith's words, however, leads to exactly the opposite conclusion: to the conviction that whatever it was that Smith was doing in these accounts it was not reporting that which he had seen and heard. Each account is vitiated by anachronisms which, when taken together, make it clear that almost nothing Smith said about the angel's ministry was based on his memories of September 1823.

In the 1842 account Smith's calling to be an instrument in God's hands was seen as going beyond that to translate the *Book of Mormon*. 'I was also informed concerning the original inhabitants . . . ', he reported; his calling to be a translator, that is to say, was something other than his calling to be an instrument 'in the hands of God'. But this could not have been part of his original understanding of his experience. As Smith understood God's will in March 1829 he was only called to translate. Even early in 1830 he was sure that, his work on the *Book of Mormon* finished, 'he was through the work God had given him to perform, except to preach the gospel'.[12] Not until the April of that year would Smith suspect that his calling, and his giftedness, was larger than he had hitherto believed.[13]

Again: although Smith insisted in his 1838 history that the angel had rendered Malachi's prophecy of the coming of Elijah (Mal. 4:5–6) with some differences from that of the KJV text, it is highly unlikely that Smith had learned of imperfections in Malachi 4 as early as 1823. In 1829 he made no attempt to correct the text of Malachi when the passage in question was copied into the *Book of Mormon*. And though he would see Mal. 4:5–6 in the light of the angel's emendations after 1838, before then he did not. Even in 1835, when he referred to the angel's quoting these verses, Smith made no reference to any changes in their words.[14]

This is not all. In 1832 and 1838 Smith explained his knowledge of where the plates were hidden by reference to his vision ('I could see the place where the plates were deposited and that so clearly that I knew the place again when I visited it', he reported in the later account). But before 1832—and occasionally afterwards as well—he talked of seeing where the plates were hidden by means of his seer stone.[15] Possibly there is no real conflict of testimony here, for it could always be argued that the angel itself was seen in a seer stone vision,[16] or that, if it was by using the seer stone that Smith saw where to look for the plates, it was only because of the angel that he knew that there were plates to look for;[17] but this apparent contradiction is troubling, nonetheless.

So is the report in the 1838 account that Smith had told his father of the vision. When, in 1826, Smith was taken before Justice Neeley in South Bainbridge, New York (the precise grounds for the trial are uncertain, though it clearly had something to do with his attempting to scry buried treasure with his stone), when called as a witness Smith's father swore

> that both he and his son were mortified that this wonderful power [of scrying] which God had so miraculously given should be used only in search of filthy lucre, or its equivalent in earthly treasure. . . . His constant prayer to his Heavenly Father was to manifest his will concerning this marvelous power. He trusted that the Son of righteousness would some day illumine the heart of this lad, and enable him to see His will concerning him.[18]

Making all due allowance for Joseph, Sr's need to gain the justice's sympathy for his son, he would hardly have taken this line had he known that Joseph, Jr had already been commissioned by an angel to find and translate scripture from pre-Columbian America.

There is, of course, no reason to doubt that Smith was looking for treasure in 1823. Not only do we have the evidence of the South Bainbridge trial that by 1826 he was well-known (if not notorious) as a scryer; there is also the fact that when in 1827 he had, by his own report, found the *Book of Mormon* plates, hindsight led him to see his search for them as having begun four years before. Perhaps in 1823 he was even looking for a cache of plates. The discovery of brass plates in 1821 in the excavation of the Erie canal could well have fired his imagination and led to seer stone visions of plates of gold.[19] But, to arrive at last at the most serious anachronism in Smith's vision narratives, he did not find the *Book of Mormon* plates that year.

In 1838 Smith would explain away the four years that supposedly elapsed between his learning of the plates and his obtaining them as years necessary for his education. The morning after the vision, he reported, he had gone to the place where the plates were and had seen them in their hiding place, but had been told by the angel that 'the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived': he needed to be tutored in 'what the Lord was going to do, and how and in what manner his kingdom was to be conducted in the last days' before he could begin to translate. In the 1832 account, however, when Smith looked for the plates he could not find them. As in the later history the angel appears to him there on the hillside, but this time Smith was not promised angelic tuition. He was simply told that he had failed to find the plates because he had sought them 'to obtain riches', and had not kept the commandment to have an eye 'single to the glory of God'. Such a detail has to be authentic—Smith would not have invented a failure of this kind—and that being so we cannot help but conclude that in 1823 he searched in vain for the plates.

Confirmation of his failure comes from the story that he was telling his family in 1827, even though, paradoxically, he was at that time claiming to have had the plates in his hands four years before. He had found them, he explained, and even taken them from their hiding place, but he had violated a commandment not to set them down before reaching home, and when he had turned his back on them they had disappeared.[20] Smith, who was convinced that a treasure could indeed be lost if a taboo were violated,[21] no doubt thought that a story of having had the plates only to lose them made a better, and less embarrassing, explanation as to why he actually only obtained the plates in 1827 than talk of an unsuccessful search. After all, such talk could have either cast doubt on his ability to scry, or have advertised that he had not acted with an eye single to God's glory.[22] But be that as it may, whatever Smith's reasons for telling this story it serves to confirm by its sheer impossibility that he failed to find anything when he scryed for treasure in the September of 1823.

It is also worth noting in this connection that when, in 1827, Smith talked of having violated a prohibition, he reported that the spirit which had given him the command had appeared as a creature 'something like a toad' before it assumed 'the appearance of a man'. This detail—if original to Smith[23]—is presumably a recollection of what he had thought when, four years before, he had first realized that the treasure he was looking for was not to be found. In scryer's lore buried treasure was supposed to be guarded by spirits which could appear in a variety of forms and which attempted to prevent human beings from discovering their hoards—and Smith believd that he had the gift of discerning them.[24] If he had found a toad (or a frog, or something of the kind) in the place where he had looked for the treasure, he would have intuitively identified it as the guardian spirit of the treasure and concluded that he had failed in his quest because he had violated some taboo.

However, a guardian spirit was evil rather than good;[25] and it sought to prevent the discovery of its treasure, not to facilitate it. It was not, in short, to be confused with an angel—and although Smith was well on the way to making this confusion by 1827 (talking of the spirit as 'the spirit of the prophet who wrote the book')[26] in doing so he was imposing a new meaning on his original perception. If Smith did enjoy a vision in 1823 he would not have identified an angel that he saw 'surrounded with . . . glory' (thus the Wentworth letter) with a subsequently encountered guardian spirit 'something like a toad'.

But did Smith see a vision in 1823? Although there is nothing essentially improbable about the idea of a seventeen-year-old seeing visions, faced with these contradictions and anachronisms it is tempting to dismiss Smith's claims to having seen an angel as poorly constructed lies. It is all the more tempting when it is realized that Smith could well have felt the need to claim spiritual experiences in order to gain status in his family.

As a child Smith would probably have been aware of his grandfather's expectation that 'God was going to raise up some branch of his family to be of great benefit to mankind', but even if he had not been he could hardly have escaped the conviction of his mother that the Smiths were a chosen family.[27] Nor could he have missed the high valuation given in his family to spiritual gifts. After all, his father had dreamt dreams which, his mother believed, fulfilled one of Joel's prophecies of the last days. In his 1838 history Smith betrays, perhaps unconsciously, a resentment of this view of his father, in that he has the angel announce in 1823 (that is, at a time when Joseph, Sr had already had most of his prophetic dreams) that Joel 2:28 was not yet fulfilled 'but was soon to be'.[28] As a younger man, we can surmise, this resentment could have been linked with a felt need to compete with his father in dreams and visions if he were to replace him in his mother's affection.[29]

The pressure on Smith to be a dreamer of dreams and seer of visions would have increased when, following his mother's conversion to Presbyterianism, he was urged to convert as well. Though Joseph wanted to do what she wanted him to do—wanted 'to get religion too, wanted to feel and shout like all the rest'—he could not.[30] The temptation would therefore have been there to invent a vision: it would have assured his mother that he had known God's favour, but it would have been safely in the past so that he did not have to 'feel and shout' along with the newly converted.

Of course, none of this can be proved. But it will not do to argue that such a scenario has to be rejected as not fitting with what Smith revealed of his character in his private correspondence and in the diaries he wrote himself (some of his diaries were compiled for him by his secretaries).[31] It is no good looking for the pattern in a person's life—what Leon Edel calls 'the figure under the carpet'[32]—if even his most private and unguarded moments are subject to the working out of an internalized lie, and what began as a deception of others ended up as an unwavering deception of the self.

Compulsive lying (mythomania) springs far more from the desire to attract attention than it does from that to deceive. As Phyllis Greenacre has written, 'It is from the confirming reaction of his audience that the imposter gets a "realistic" sense of self.'[33] It is of interest, therefore, that Smith would habitually talk of his visions in order to talk about himself and his authority, rather than of God and his grace. (The only clear exception to this generalization, an 1832 account of the 'first vision', has been seen by Neal E. Lambert and Richard H. Cracroft as written in imitation of contemporary spiritual autobiographies.)[34] Typical in this respect are the remarks Smith made in 1834 to church members in Pontiac, Michigan. He talked of enjoying the ministry of angels, and then added: 'by this ye shall prove me to be a true Prophet. . . .'[35] The story was told to provide the proof.

And yet, rather than mythomania, I would suggest mythopoeia as an explanation for the contradictions and anachronisms in Smith's accounts. For what is improbable is not that Smith saw an angel but that he was able to report the angel's words. Hallucinations are usually unisensorial, appealing to only a single sense;[36] and in those which do have auditory elements vision is more significant than audition.[37] If, therefore, Smith did see an angel it is unlikely that he also heard him—and if he did hear him it is extremely unlikely that he would have heard him talk at the length that his histories report.

My counting Smith's experience as a hallucination has no pejorative intent. Hallucinations are—broadly defined—simply 'perception-like occurrences that have no immediate sensory basis',[38] and that would seem to fit Smith's case. Even if we use a stricter definition, discriminating between visions and hallucinations on the grounds that the former are known to occur 'within the soul', whereas the subjects of the latter are thought to be really there,[39] Smith's experience should still be described as a hallucination. He had no doubt that the angel was in the room with him that night.

However, what we call Smith's experience is relatively unimportant.[40] What concerns us here is that his vision/hallucination would have been unisensorial, and that what he reported as the angel's message would not have been a record of words that he actually heard. Instead it would have been his own interpretation of what the vision meant, expressed as a message—and necessarily, over the years, as that understanding changed, so the words attributed to the angel would have changed as well.

These changes are hardly surprising. It is one thing to know what one has seen, but quite another to know what it represents.[41] Smith could, that is to say, have needed to try out different explanations for the angel's coming until he found one that made sense. He would go through this process of trying out different interpretations following an 1836 vision in which, he thought at first, he had seen Elijah come and commit 'the keys of [the last] dispensation . . . to [his] hands'.[42] A little over two years later Smith was wondering whether Elijah had not only appeared in order to guarantee his priesthood authority,[43] and not long after that he was even wondering if it had been Elijah that he had seen. He began to teach that Elijah was yet to come, and when, about five years later, he began to associate the ministry of Elijah with the 'Holy Spirit of Promise' he did so without mentioning his vision of eight years before.[44] There is no reason why the difficulty of knowing for sure the meaning of what he had seen could not have been equally great in 1823.

But, it should be noted, it could also be that over the years Smith's understanding matured, and that as time passed he discovered implications (and then further implications) to what he had seen. In the *Book of Mormon* Smith would explain that angels came 'to prepare the way among the children of men, by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him'.[45] If Smith had thought of angels along these lines in 1823, it could well be that what began as a sense that he was chosen to bear testimony[46] deepened into a sense of being chosen to bear testimony through the *Book of Mormon*, and then of being chosen to establish God's kingdom in the latter days.

Whatever the explanation for his changes in the way he understood his vision, Smith would have had no qualms about varying his accounts of what the angel said. As he understood it, angels 'spoke' 'by the power of the Holy Ghost', and the Holy Ghost spoke through the medium of a person's intuitions ('sudden strokes of ideas', he would call them in 1843).[47] It was, therefore, only to be expected that an angel's message would be intuited rather than heard, and that, as with any other revelation, an angel's 'words' could be revised or added to as fresh intuition brought fresh insight.[48] Further, living when and where he did Smith had a pre-modern sense of history and the historian's task,[49] and would not have hesitated to improve upon his vision narratives if he thought that he could thereby better convey the truth of his experiences.

How then did Smith first interpret his vision (taking him at his word that there was a vision), if not as a message that there were gold plates hidden up for him to find? A complete answer is, of course, impossible. However, four elements of his initial understanding can be identified. He thought the vision inspired, a sign that God had forgiven him his sins, a proof of the apostasy of the churches of his day, and a divine call.

Smith's certainty that his vision was divinely inspired has been taken for granted up until now, but his seeing what he saw as an angel should be recognized as being an act of interpretation on his part. Smith could have dismissed his vision as satanic deception or as the product of 'depraved' senses,[50] but, no doubt because of his parents' belief in the possibility of visions, he did not. Although he had second thoughts as to how he should refer to what he had seen (as well as talking of 'an angel' he would talk of having seen 'the spirit of the Lord' and, in the 1838 and 1842 accounts, 'a personage': not, that is to say, an angel by a strict definition but one of the spirits of the just)[51] he had no doubt that his vision was of God.

This is perhaps not surprising, for the content of visions are derived from the iconology known to the visionary.[52] Smith would have supplied his own imagery. And, since the mind blocks the perception of elements which do not fit with the interpretation of raw data which it has already unconsciously arrived at,[53] if there had been any elements in his vision that did not fit with the idea that it had been of an angel they would probably have been suppressed without Smith ever being consciously aware of them.

Forgiveness is part of the angel's message in the 1832 and 1838 accounts, and implied in an 1829 account by Oliver Cowdery as well as in Smith's 1835 conversation.[54] We should not doubt that it was one of the most important elements in Smith's earliest understandings of his experience. In the *Book of Mormon*, to be sure, Smith would primarily see the ministry of angels as God's means to call sinners to repentance,[55] and not as evidence of a person's acceptance by God, but in 1823 it was acceptance and forgiveness that Smith felt that he needed; not a spur to repentance. Idolizing as he did an older brother remarkable for his sobriety, Smith felt troubled that he had been guilty of 'a light, and too often, vain mind, [and] exhibiting a foolish and trifling conversation'.[56] He would have seized upon the vision as evidence that God had not forsaken him but had instead forgiven him his sins.

Inevitably, it should go without saying, Smith would also have taken his vision to be evidence for the apostasy of Christendom. The simple fact of having seen an angel in an age when there were supposed to be no more visions from God[57] would have forced Smith to conclude that if his vision was not a delusion (and this possibility, as we have seen, he rejected), the churchmen of his day had to be wrong.[58] It is no wonder then that his mother, in the preliminary manuscript of her family history, has the angel directly address Joseph in this way:

> I perceive that you are pondering in your mind which is the true church. There is no true church on earth, no, not one and has not been one since Peter. . . . The churches that are now upon the earth are all man made churches.[59]

There is anachronism and exaggeration here, for as late as 1829 Smith would still think that his calling was not to reject the church of his day but to build it up, or reform it.[60] Even while translating the *Book of Mormon* he was prepared to attend Methodist meetings in Harmony, Pennsylvania.[61] Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that Smith would have thought the vision confirmation of his parents' suspicions that Christendom had fallen into apostasy.[62]

Relevant here are the first four verses of Psalm 14 in Smith's 'new translation' of the Bible.[63]

> [1] The fool hath said in his heart, there is no man that hath seen God. Because he showeth himself not unto us, therefore there is no God. Behold, they are corrupt; they have done abominable works, and none of them doeth good. [2] For the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, and by his voice said unto his servant, Seek ye among the children of men, to see if there are any that do understand God. And he opened his mouth unto the Lord, and said, Behold, all these who say they are thine. [3] The Lord answered, and said, They are all gone aside, they are together become filthy, thou canst behold none of them that are doing good, no, not one. [4] All they have for their teachers are workers of iniquity, and there is no knowledge in them. They are they who eat up my people. They eat bread and call not upon the Lord.

In using these verses we need to allow for Smith's intending them to be a proof-text for his first vision, not a commentary on his vision of 1823; and for his being limited in what he could write by the possibilities for correction and elaboration that he could see in the Biblical psalm.[64] But, all of that said, they are of considerable interest. In them Smith describes a dialogue between God and his servant—or, more precisely, an exchange over time. (The servant was told to 'seek . . . among the children of men' [v. 2]; presumably it was only after he had done this that he 'opened his mouth unto the Lord'.)

Obviously enough these are not the ipsissima verba of an actual dialogue. But Smith seems to have recognized in Ps. 14:2–3 KJV the essence of what he had learned between 1820 (when his first vision first forced him to confront the question of the authority of the churches of his neighbourhood) and 1823, when his second vision, coming after two and a half years of reflection, forced the conclusion that the churches of Palmyra and Manchester lacked a saving, experiential 'knowledge' of God. In Smith's 'translation' the first vision became God's question, Smith's thinking through the implications of this vision the servant's reply, and the 1823 vision God's answer.

The fourth conclusion Smith would have drawn from his vision was that he was called. His first vision had signalled his salvation, but though such a witness was unusual it was not unprecedented.[65] A second vision was a rare sign of grace, however, and inescapably, even though he could not yet sense anything of the specific nature of his calling, marked him (as he understood it) as one of God's chosen. All he had to do was wait and—to use his father's words at the South Bainbridge trial—[trust] that the Son of righteousness would some day illumine [his] heart . . . and enable him to see His will concerning him'.

It is, of course, possible that we should still dismiss all of Smith's claims for this vision and view him as a compulsive liar. Nothing in the evidence forces us to do so, however; and to insist that Smith never saw visions is to let psychological theory (or theological assumptions) dominate the historical evidence in an illegitimate fashion.[66] After all, once it is allowed that Smith could have seen visions (or could have hallucinated), there is no reason why, when seventeen, he could not have seen what he thought was an angel, and taken what he saw as a testimony both to his own standing before God and the state of the churches of his day. Nor, if it be allowed that Smith's accounts were interpretations rather than descriptions or fabrications, is there any reason why he could not in good faith have come by the autumn of 1827 to think of the vision as the beginning of his call to translate the *Book of Mormon*, and attributed to the angel words to that effect.

Smith's accounts of his vision were, I would suggest, a series of commentaries based on a 'text' which he never described; and if this is accepted it should not surprise us that they differed. 'Commentary', Northrop Frye has written, '. . .

translates the implicit into the explicit, [and] can isolate the aspect of meaning, large or small, which is appropriate for certain readers to grasp at a certain time'.[67] This process of translation is involved in any act of commentary, including any made by Smith. As over the years he saw his experience differently—indeed as at times others taught him to see it differently[68]—so he attributed to the angel the words which made explicit what he then realized had been implicit in the text of his vision—the fact of his vision—all along. Inevitably, as he matured, the 'angel message' became richer and more complex.[69] But it did not become any more or any less true or, for those who could receive it in faith, give any more or any less cause for rejoicing.

NOTES

1 Joseph Smith, Jr, *The Book of Mormon*, Palmyra, N.Y., the author 1830, pp. [i], iv, 527, 538; Dean C. Jessee, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, Salt Lake City, Deseret Book 1984, pp. 6–7.

2 'And my soul is filled with gladness, and banished are my fears, / Since the precious angel message came to me': James L. Edwards, 'I have Found the Glorious Gospel', *The Hymnal: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Days Saints*, Independence, Mo., Herald Publishing House 1956, no. 284.

3 In the early 1820s Smith worked away from home to bring outside income to his family; amongst his activities was treasure-digging: Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, Urbana, Ill., University of Illinois Press 1984, pp. 49, 59–60, 69. For Smith's manner of translation see G. St John Stott, 'The Seer Stone Controversy: Writing the *Book of Mormon*', *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, 19:3 (Summer 1986) 37–38.

4 For a history on metal plates, see James Adair, *The History of the American Indians*, London, Edward and Charles Dilley 1775, pp. 178–179, and cf. Ethan Smith (no relation), *View of the Hebrews*, 2nd edn., Poultney, Vt., Smith and Shute 1825, pp. 115, 223.

5 Before taking what he claimed were the plates to Pennsylvania, Smith used at least four hiding places to keep them safe (Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and his Progenitors for Many Generations*, Liverpool, Orson Pratt 1853, pp. 104, 105, 108, 113); clearly there had to have been something that could have been stolen or such precautions would have been unnecessary. This could as well have been something fabricated by Smith as a genuine find, but according to a history which he began in 1838, between December 1827 and February 1828 Smith 'commenced copying the characters off the plates', and then, after copying 'a considerable number of them', attempted to make a translation (B. H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Period 1, Salt Lake City, Deseret Book 1948–1951, **1:19**): this would have been pointless if there had not really been engravings for Smith to worry about and try to translate. In 1835 Smith would attempt to translate one of a set of papyri that he had purchased, and his first move would be to transcribe some of the hieroglyphics and attempt to determine their meaning (see Richard P. Howard, 'The "Book of Abraham" in the Light of History and Egyptology', *Courage: A Journal of Faith, History and Action*, April 1970, pp. 34–41); possibly in doing this he was following his earlier practice with respect to the 'reformed Egyptian' of his find.

6 The question as to whether there was an 1820 vision is a controversial one: see Marvin S. Hill, 'The First Vision Controversy: A Critique and Reconciliation', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 15:2 (Summer 1982), pp. 39–42); I am persuaded that there was an 1820 vision by the parallels between the biography Smith gives to the youthful Mormon (the *Book of Mormon*, pp. 518–519) and the events of his own youth. Mormon moves 'to the land southward' when 11; Smith, to western New York in his 11th year. Mormon becomes a record keeper for his people when he is 24; Smith translates Mormon's record in his 24th year. Mormon is 'visited of the Lord and tasted, and knew of the goodness of Jesus' when he is 15; Smith, by his own account, sees Christ in his 15th year.

7 Stott, pp. 35–54.

8 In 1842 Smith would make much of the plates being 'bound together in a volume, as the leaves of a book with three rings running through the whole' (Jessee, pp. 214–215), but none of those who examined what Smith claimed were the plates made any mention of such rings. (An exception is Lucy Smith, according to Henry Caswell, *The City of the Mormons; or, Three Days at Nauvoo, in 1842*, London, J. G. F. & J. Rivington 1842, p. 27, but as she makes no such mention in her *Biographical Sketches*, Caswell was probably drawing on Smith's own description, which appeared in an issue of the Mormon *Times and Seasons* which he had seen [p. 23].) However, two of Smith's followers had reported seeing such a binding in visions of the plates (Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses*, Salt Lake City, Deseret Book 1981, p. 31), and Smith seems to have adopted the detail without any thought of consistency. It is a moot point as to whether Smith found whatever it was that he showed to his followers, or found something else and fabricated what he showed. Whatever the case, Smith insisted that the plates could only be seen with the spiritual eyes: *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints*, Kirtland, Oh., the proprietors 1835, 42:1; *A Book of Commandments for the Government of the Church of Christ*, Zion [Independence, Mo.], W. W. Phelps 1833, 4:8. This, in itself, suggests a discrepancy between what he showed his followers wrapped in a cloth (William Smith, *William Smith on Mormonism*, Lamoni, Ia.: Herald Steam Book and Job Office 1883, p. 12) and what Smith had himself seen in vision (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 42:2).

9 Jessee, pp. 6–7; the account was written at Smith's dictation by Federick G. Williams.

10 All can be found in Jessee: see pp. 200–202 for the 1838 account (in the hand of James Mulholland); pp. 213–215 for the 1842 letter, the original for which is not extant, but which was first published in the Nauvoo, Illinois *Times and Seasons* for March 1, 1842; and pp. 76–77 for Smith's diary for 9 November 1835, kept for him by Warren Parrish.

11 'Confirming Records of Moroni's Coming', *The Improvement Era*, September 1970, p. 8.

12 *Book of Commandments*, 4:2; David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, Richmond, Mo., David Whitmer 1887, p. 32.

13 *Book of Commandments*, 22:1, 8.

14 For a post-1838 reading of Malachi 4:5–6, see Andrew F. Ehat and Lyman W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*, Provo, Ut., Religious Studies Center Brigham Young University 1980, pp. 327–336; for pre-1838 readings see the *Book of Mormon*, p. 505; *Doctrine and Covenants*, 30:3; Joseph Smith, Jr, *The Holy*

Scriptures Containing the Old and New Testaments: An Inspired Revision of the Authorized Version, 2nd edn, Independence, Mo.: Herald House 1944, at Mal. 4:5–6 (for the manuscript of this see Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of their Textual Development*, Independence, Mo., Herald House 1969, p. 188); Jessee, pp. 187, 76.

15 Richard Van Waggoner and Steve Walker, 'Joseph Smith: "The Gift of Seeing"', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 15:2 (Summer 1982), pp. 56–57.

16 Ibid., p. 57.

17 Henry Harris, an acquaintance of the Smiths, had heard a story something like this, presumably before they left Manchester in 1831: E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, Painesville, Oh., the author 1834, p. 252.

18 W. D. Purple's account, first published in the *Chenango Union* for 3 May 1877, in Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America*, Provo, Ut., Brigham Young University Press 1967, 1:481.

19 Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*, 2nd edn., New York, Knopf 1971, p. 35, citing the Palmyra, New York, *Western Farmer* for 19 September 1821.

20 Lucy Smith, pp. 85–86; Willard Chase, in Howe, p. 242; Dean Jessee, 'Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History', *Brigham Young University Studies*, **17** (1976) 31; Fayette Lapham, in the *Historical Magazine*, 1870, pp. 305–309, quoted by Marvin S. Hill, 'Money-Digging Folklore and the Beginnings of Mormonism; An Interpretative Suggestion', *Brigham Young University Studies*, **24** (1984) 480.

21 William Stafford, in Howe, p. 239; Larry C. Porter and Jan Shipps, 'The Colesville, New York, "Exodus" Seen From Two Documentary Perspectives', *New York History*, **62** (1981) 207.

22 Alan Taylor, 'The Early Republic's Supernatural Economy: Treasure Seeking in the American Northeast, 1780–1830', *American Quarterly*, **38** (1986) 13; Stott, p. 46.

23 Willard Chase reports that he was told this story by Joseph Smith, Sr (Howe, p. 242). Chase was himself involved in treasure-digging (Bushman, p. 70) and so could have improved upon the tale from his own knowledge of scrying; but there is so much evidence for the Smiths' belief in magic that Chase's story should probably be accepted as reporting what Joseph, Jr had told his father.

24 Joseph Capron, in Howe, p. 259; 'Obediah Dogberry' [Abner Cole], in Kirkham, 1:228; Taylor, p. 11. Kathleen M. Briggs, *A Dictionary of British Folk Tales, Part B: Folk Legends*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1971, 1:662, records an English tale of a spirit which could appear as either hen or ape.

25 Stafford, in Howe, p. 238. With an eye to Smith's story, Ronald W. Walker, 'The Persisting Idea of American Treasure Hunting', *Brigham Young University Studies*, **24** (1984) 443, argues that guardians could have divine as well as demonic origins; however, he notes that 'generally the American treasure guardian was a murdered youth or man whose body had been left with the buried valuables to secure their protection', and it is therefore of interest that (according to Fayette Lapham) the guardian spirit appeared to Smith 'in an ancient suit of clothes, . . . the clothes bloody' (see Hill, 'Money-Digging Folklore', pp. 479–80). All of these details work against the idea that Smith thought of the spirit as an angel or as a prophet from ancient America, in 1823. In 1827, of course, he had second thoughts—hence his mother's later version of the story in which the spirit is Christianized as an angel: Lucy Smith, pp. 94–95.

26 Although Smith would come to think of the spirit as that of 'the prophet who wrote the book', he remained uncertain as to that prophet's identity. In 1835 he would identify him as 'Moroni' (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 50:2), but this was not how he thought of him in 1832 (when the angel referred to 'Maroni & his fathers the servants of the living God' without any hint that he was himself Moroni), or in 1838 when he would refer to him as 'Nephi' (an identification first made in 1829 by Mary Whitmer: see Anderson, *Investigating*, p. 31). In 1827 Smith had not yet begun to translate and probably had no idea as to who were the prophets to whom he would attribute the book.

27 Richard L. Anderson, *Joseph Smith's New England Heritage: Influences of Grandfathers Solomon Mack and Asael Smith*, Salt Lake City, Deseret Book 1971, p. 112; Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition*, Urbana, Ill., University of Illinois Press 1985, pp. 102–103.

28 Lucy Smith, p. 71; Jessee, *Personal Writings*, p. 204.

29 Phyllis Greenacre, 'The Imposter', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* **27** (1958) 368.

30 William Smith, in Kirkham, 1:44; Alexander Neibaur, in Milton V. Backman, Jr, *Joseph Smith's First Vision: The First Vision in its Historical Context*, Salt Lake City, Bookcraft 1971, p. 177. Hill, 'The First Vision Controversy', pp. 39–42, argues for Lucy Smith's converting in 1824, but Bushman, p. 205, prefers the traditional date of 1820.

31 Marvin S. Hill, 'Secular or Sectarian History? A Critique of *No Man Knows My History*', *Church History* **43** (1974) 90–91.

32 'The Figure Under the Carpet', in Marc Pechter, ed., *Telling Lives: The Biographer's Art*, Washington, D. C., New Republic Books/The National Portrait Gallery 1979, pp. 242–247.

33 Greenacre, p. 367; cf. Graham Reed, *The Psychology of Anomalous Experience: A Cognitive Approach*, London, Hutchinson University Library 1972, p. 81; Marcel Eck, *Lies and Truth*, New York, Macmillan 1971, pp. 105–107.

34 'Literary Form and Historical Understanding: Joseph Smith's First Vision', *Journal of Mormon History* **7** (1980) 35.

35 Edward Stevenson, in Backman, p. 179.

36 Celia Green and Charles McCreery, *Apparitions*, London, Hamish Hamilton 1975, pp. 25, 100–101.

37 Karl Jaspers, *General Psychopathology*, translated by J. Hoenic and M. Hamilton, Manchester, Manchester University Press 1963, p. 74, reports that in hallucinations 'one sense supplements the other'—but it would be better to say that there are sometimes auditory elements in a predominantly visual experience.

38 Peter Lloyd et al., *Introduction to Psychology: An Integrated Approach*, London, Fontana 1984, p. 136.

39 Johannes Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell 1962, pp. 122–123.

40 To call it a hallucination is not to deny that it could be counted as inspired if one so chose: see E. Schillebeeckx's discussion of 'visions of the imagination, made miraculously by God or even brought about in a purely providential manner': *Mary Mother of the Redemption: The Religious Bases of the Mystery of Mary*, translated by N. D. Smith, London, Sheed and Ward 1964, p. 195.

41 A locus classicus is Gérard de Nerval, *Oeuvres*, ed. Albert Beguin and Jean Richer, Paris, ed. Gallimard 1966, 1:392.

42 Jessee, *Personal Writings*, p. 187. Malachi had foretold that Elijah would 'turn the hearts of the children to the fathers' so that they would remember and keep the

covenants that God had made with Israel—covenants that the prophet was dismayed to see his contemporaries 'treacherously' profane (Mal. 4:5–6, 2:10)—and Smith had been convinced that the *Book of Mormon* would play an important part in restoring Israel to her covenant relationship with God (*Book of Commandments*, 2:6, 9:16). It is not surprising, therefore, that in 1836 Smith would think that Elijah had finally come.

43 Jessee, *Personal Writings*, pp. 203–204.

44 Ehat and Cook, pp. 11, 43, 79, 239–240, 244, 335.

45 *Book of Mormon*, p. 579.

46 As a Methodist: see Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism*, New York, D. Appleton 1867, p. 18. He would not have thought this incompatible with treasure-digging: see Hill, 'Secular or Sectarian', p. 92.

47 Stott, pp. 38–40.

48 Ehat and Cook, p. 81.

49 Dean C. Jessee, 'The Reliability of Joseph Smith's History', *Journal of Mormon History* **3** (1976) 24–27.

50 Thereby following 2 Cor. 11:14; cf. Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press 1974, pp. 27–30; I take the phrase 'depraved senses' from Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland; or, The Transformation: An American Tale* (1798), Garden City, N.Y., Anchor Books 1973, p. 45.

51 For Smith identifying the subject of his vision as an angel, see the 1832 account and the *Book of Commandments*, 24:7, and cf. *Doctrine and Covenants*, 33:2. For the 'spirit of the Lord', see Martin Harris, in Kirkham, 1:51, and cf. the *Book of Mormon*, p. 24. For the distinction between angels and the spirits of the just—probably first suggested by Oliver Cowdery's letter in the *Messenger and Advocate*, February 1835, p. 79—see Ehat and Cook, p. 25.

52 Henry Ey, *Traité des hallucinations*, Paris, ed. Masson 1973, 1:106.

53 D. Hodson, 'The Nature of Scientific Observation', *School Science Review*, September 1986, p. 22; C. Blakemore, 'Environmental Constraints on Development in the Visual System', in R. A. Hinde and J. Stevenson-Hinde, eds., *Constraints on Learning*, New York, Academic Press 1973, p. 51.

54 For Cowdery's account, see the *Book of Commandments*, 24:7; the attribution is based on Robert J. Woodford, 'How the Revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants were Received and Compiled', *The Ensign*, January 1985, p. 28.

55 *Book of Mormon*, p. 579.

56 *Messenger and Advocate*, December 1834, p. 40; Jessee, *Personal Writings*, pp. 535–536. Richard Lloyd Anderson suggests that 'conversation' here, as in Gal. 1:13 and 1 Pe. 3:1 KJV, meant behaviour, or pattern of life, not talk: 'The Mature Joseph Smith and Treasure Searching', *Brigham Young University Studies*, **24** (1984) 495, 548 n. 22.

57 Joseph Bellamy, *True Religion Delineated* (1750) in *The Works*, Boston, Doctrinal Tract and Book Society 1853, 1:88; Samuel Hopkins, *System of Doctrines* (1793) in *The Works*, Boston, Doctrinal Tract and Book Society 1852, 1:413.

58 In the 1838 history Smith reports that he personally experienced the hostility of the local clergy to the idea of contemporary visions.

59 Fd. 2; the manuscript is in the archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

60 *Book of Commandments*, 9:14, 4:5.

61 Bushman, pp. 94–95.

62 Ibid., p. 51.

63 *The Holy Scriptures . . . An Inspired Revision, loc. cit.*

64 For Smith's Bible translation, see Anthony A. Hutchinson, 'LDS Approaches to the Holy Bible', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 15:1 (Spring 1982), 109–110. Smith was at work on the Psalms within a few months of writing the 1832 account: Robert J. Matthews, *'A Plainer Translation': Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible—A History and Commentary*, Provo, Ut., Brigham Young University Press 1975, p. 79; Jessee, *Personal Writings*, p. 3.

65 Smith's contemporary Elias Smith (no relation) claimed to have seen Christ when he was 16 (Brodie, p. 22).

66 Thomas A. Kohut, 'Psychohistory as History', *American Historical Review*, **91** (1986) 336–354, gives guidelines.

67 *An Anatomy of Criticism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press 1957, p. 87.

68 Thus Smith drew on a pamphlet by Orson Pratt for the 1842 Wentworth letter account (Jessee, *Personal Writings*, p. 667).

69 Lindblom takes stylistic evidence of reflection in a vision narrative as evidence that the vision was literary rather than ecstatic (p. 143), but, as Kenneth O. Freer has pointed out ('A Study of Vision Reports in Biblical Literature', Ph.D. dissertation, Yale 1975, p. 15), one has to allow the ecstatic to reflect upon his experience and shape his narrative.

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'COXEY'S ARMY' AS A MILLENNIAL MOVEMENT

Michael Barkun

'Coxey's Army' was the popular name for a march of unemployed workers which left Massillon, Ohio, on Easter Sunday 1894, and arrived in Washington, D.C., on May Day. It was the first nationally reported protest march on Washington and as an example of protest against economic conditions is usually classified as a form of Populism. Careful analysis, however, reveals that it possessed important religious elements, specifically an idiosyncratic millennialism. Its millennialism was compounded of three elements: (1) a premillennial view of history; (2) Populist conspiracy theory, identifying Jewish bankers as the cause of economic problems; and (3) a vulgarized belief in reincarnation, according to which all souls were deemed to include a fraction of the reincarnated soul of Jesus. Notwithstanding its doctrinal peculiarities, 'Coxey's Army' resembles many of the syncretic millenarian movements of the 1970s and '80s, with its fusion of fundamentalist doctrine, political radicalism, and Asian-occult elements.

Until at least the end of the First World War, the phrase 'Coxey's Army' was a synonym for 'a rabble' or a 'disorganized group'. For Canadian soldiers, it meant 'a careless, happy-go-lucky army'.[1] In fact, it was neither a rabble, despite the shabby dress of the marchers, nor disorganized (indeed, it was divided into units with a command structure), nor 'happy-go-lucky', either in its origins or in its quixotic journey.

'Coxey's Army' was a march of unemployed workers in 1894, and the first protest march to Washington that received national attention. As such, it was the ancestor of the 'Bonus March' of the 1930s, and of the numerous Washington marches of the 1960s and '70s on behalf of racial equality and an end to the Vietnam War.

1. AMERICAN MILLENNIALISM

'Coxey's Army' is usually classified as a movement of economic and social protest, and, as such, a secular enterprise. What follows will establish that this categorization is incorrect, that 'Coxey's Army' had profound religious implications, and that those implications are connected with its role in the redefinition of American millenarian thought. But before we pursue the question of precisely what the 'Army' was and what religious role it played, we must first briefly examine the cross-currents of nineteenth-century millennialism.

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American millennialism underwent a series of critical transformations in the nineteenth century. Heir to a rich English and colonial tradition, its original orientation was premillennial. That is, history would end with Christ's Second Coming, which would inaugurate the promised thousand years of bliss before the final judgment. Premillennialists associated the approach of the 'latter days' with violence and tumult, saw God as the effective agent of the coming changes, and regarded certain key Biblical texts as timetables, which, read in proper conjunction with real-world portents, would indicate the imminence of eschatological events. During the first half of the nineteenth century, however, the dominance of premillennial thinking was challenged.

Two factors were associated with the decline of premillennialism: the rise of a competitive orientation towards the future, and the Millerite debacle of the 1840s. The rival to premillennialism was postmillennialism, whose chiliastic time-line placed the millennium before instead of after the Second Coming. More significantly, postmillennialists saw the millennium not as the outcome of violent and abrupt divine intervention, but as the cumulative product of incremental reforms brought about by human effort. This new regard for the role of the saved in the economy of world transformation mirrored the instrumental and manipulative view that Americans took toward their expanding nation. It also appeared validated by the wave of pre-Civil War revivals known collectively as the 'Second Great Awakening'. Indeed, revivals and postmillennialism were symbiotically related, for just as the tempo of revivals suggested progress toward the millennium, so the doctrine of the role of the saved in bringing that millennium about gave urgency to the revivals.[2]

If one factor in the decline of premillennialism was the rise of a competitor, another surely was the embarrassment of Millerism. The Millerite movement followed the exegetical system of William Miller, a lay preacher who calculated that the Second Coming would occur between 21 March 1843 and 21 March 1844. The force of Miller's logic, together with the depressed and stressful economic conditions that followed the Panic of 1837, made of Millerism perhaps the largest and most visible millenarian movement in American history. It was, however, destined for the same ignominy as other groups that had succumbed to the temptation of date-setting. Although Miller's associates quickly offered a second date of 22 October 1844, and pressured Miller into accepting it, the new prediction simply delayed the inevitable disillusionment a few more months. The 'Great Disappointment' effectively destroyed premillennialism for the next several decades.[3]

By the 1870s, therefore, premillennialism was relegated to the margins of American religious discourse. Postmillennialism, although nominally the victor, was itself increasingly enfeebled, for by placing so much emphasis upon the transformative effects of religious and social reform, postmillennialism appeared less and less distinguishable from the Victorian secular doctrine of inevitable progress. This millenarian 'trough' persisted until nearly the end of the nineteenth century, by which time a new chiliastic receptivity began to appear.

This renewed interest in the end-time was compounded of a number of elements: in the first place, a fashionable *fin de siècle* pessimism took hold in literary and intellectual circles. At a theological level, premillennialism was invigorated by the importation from England of a variant form of premillennialism—'dispensationalism'—which minimized the dangers of disconfirmed predictions by pushing the Second Coming farther into the future. Finally, American millenarians were gradually coming to grips with the need to assign some eschatological role to economic and social distress.[4]

The search for portents that might determine the imminence of the 'latter days' had traditionally assumed an attitude of 'the worse, the better'. That is, the worse the situation, the more likely that the final consummation was near.[5] Yet this position was severely constrained by the assumption that two forms of worldly woe were of pre-eminent importance, natural disasters and major political and military overturnings. No place had been assigned to economic crisis, not only because the Bible was replete with references to earthquakes and battles but not to depressions, but also because millenarian thought had its roots in a pre-capitalist society. Hence received sources made no mention of crises induced by a sudden and dramatic failure of the economic system.

Yet, by the early 1800s the significance of such events was becoming inescapable. Indeed, while disconfirmed predictions played a major role in Millerism's demise, a significant factor was the inability of the Second Adventists to assign theological significance to the depression around them. Despite their failure to do so, other millenarians had begun to speak more directly to economic and social issues. Many were communitarians, housed in the 'utopian' communities that were so significant an element in the social landscape of pre-bellum America. The Shakers, the Oneida Perfectionists, and others began to explore the linkages between economic and religious categories.[6] After the Civil War, these explorations continued at the fringes of Populism, with the aim of redefining the millenarian vision so that it spoke more directly to disasters inflicted not by storms, earthquakes, or wars, but by mysterious economic forces.

'Coxey's Army' stands in this line of millenarian innovation, at the point where the premillennial longing for the end-time joined the social protests of the economically disenfranchised. Rooted simultaneously in the radical monetary theories of Populism and in the millenarian expectations of popular religion, 'Coxey's Army' drew millennialism back into the arena of contending political forces.

2. THE 'ARMY' AS A MILLENARIAN MOVEMENT

'Coxey's Army' has customarily garnered a sentence or two in most histories of the period. To some scholars, it stands as the best known of a series of so-called 'industrial armies'—bands of workers meandering toward Washington from all over America. Most of the other 'armies' originated in the West, where Jack London briefly attached himself to one of them; some had never heard of Coxey, and none ever reached its destination.[7] For others, 'Coxey's Army' was simply a picturesque episode in the chronicle of Populism, a movement so richly endowed with vivid personalities and eccentric ideas that 'Coxey's Army' did not appear particularly unusual. Richard Hofstadter mentions the 'Army' only in passing, along with Populism and the Homestead and Pullman strikes as a basis for the intimations of revolution that gripped the middle class in the 1890s.[8]

These characterizations are all correct, as far as they go. There were indeed numerous 'industrial armies', some substantially larger than Coxey's, and the leadership of the 'Army' was staunchly Populist. Thus, 'Coxey's Army' can serve as a useful symbol of the political consequences of the Depression of 1893, which increased both the numbers of the unemployed and the depth of their misery. Nonetheless, to categorize and thus in a sense dismiss 'Coxey's Army' as merely a dramatic protest during a period of economic contraction is to miss one of its central elements, for 'Coxey's Army' was at least as much a religious movement as it was an economic one.

Indeed, its religious character was evident in its very name, for while 'Coxey's Army' was the name given it by the press, it was in fact officially named the 'Commonweal of Christ'. Its religiosity was an idiosyncratic amalgam of millennialism and reincarnation, fused with a radical critique of the distribution of wealth in America. Although this religious character was widely remarked upon at the time, it was scarcely mentioned in later years and has plainly been considered an embarrassment by authors sympathetic to Coxey. To reconstruct 'Coxey's Army' as the millenarian movement it was, as indeed the 'Commonweal of Christ', does not, however, diminish its dignity or denigrate the sufferings of the unemployed; rather, it recaptures a remarkable fusion of millenarian religion and social protest.

In addition to the light 'Coxey's Army' sheds on patterns of protest at the turn of the century, it also illuminates more contemporary concerns. For the March anticipated events of the late 1960s, '70s, and '80s. At the level of action it prefigured the much larger marches on behalf of civil rights and an end to the war in Vietnam. At the level of belief, its intertwining of religion and politics was replicated both in 'cult' movements and on the political Right. If the March lapsed into obscurity after World War I, as the rapid decline in the literature about it attests, that was because it was more easily defined in later years as an exercise in public eccentricity. While elements of it seem no less bizarre now than they did then, much of it speaks with unusual directness, suggesting that the time may have come to re-examine the March of 'Coxey's Army'.

3. THE MARCH

The story of the March has already been well told. For present purposes it suffices only to provide the outlines of the journey. The March began on 25 March 1894, in Massillon, Ohio, the home town of Jacob Sechler Coxey, an affluent businessman of strong Populist views. There were fewer than a hundred marchers at the beginning and never more than two or three hundred until near the very end. The route lay through the industrial communities of eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania, where popular support for workers' causes struggled against official hostility. From there the March entered the forbidding terrain of the Cumberland Mountains, an area so insular it seemed scarcely changed since the eighteenth century. The primitive roads, the absence of local Populist support, and a spring blizzard turned the mountain crossing into an ordeal that very nearly ended the journey. But new supporters were waiting in the lowlands near Washington, so that when the Army entered the city on 1 May 1894, it consisted of between 500 and 1000. All the while its progress had been tracked by a press corps that sometimes numbered over 40 reporters together with linemen and telegraphers who moved like advancemen a day or two ahead to set up communications.[9]

The March came to a grotesque end. Coxey wished to conclude with an address from the Capitol steps. The vacillating administration of Grover Cleveland, wishing both to ignore the March and suppress it, left matters in the hands of the District of Columbia authorities. Under the Capitol Grounds Act, Coxey and two associates were arrested and sentenced to 20 days in jail for displaying banners, while Coxey and his chief lieutenant, the 'Marshall' of the Commonweal, Carl Browne, were additionally fined five dollars for walking on the grass. The Marchers retreated to a suburban campsite, where the humid Washington heat dispersed them more effectively than any police.

Jacob Coxey, an Episcopalian,[10] was not conspicuously religious. His interests instead centred on a set of legislative proposals he had devised to simultaneously cure the unemployment problem and provide the nation with a much-needed transportation infrastructure. Roads and other public works to provide jobs for the unemployed were to be financed by non-interest bearing bonds issued by local governments and deposited with the federal Treasury. The Treasury in turn would use the bonds as security to issue additional currency as an economic stimulus.[11] While Coxey was constantly in search of new ways to place these proposals before Congress, the idea for the March was apparently not his. He lent the project his stature as a local notable, he financed it out of his small fortune, and he used his Populist connections to give it visibility and support. He also served as an articulate and respectable spokesperson for the interests of the unemployed. Not only did Coxey not conceive the March, but also he did not organize it and only rarely led it.

The March was conceived, organized, and led by a much more obscure figure, Carl Browne—a Populist orator, a crude but powerful political cartoonist, and a patent medicine salesman. He also thought of himself as a kind of prophet, and it was he who saw in a march on Washington not merely a vehicle for the dramatization of political and economic ideas, but a sacred event which would tap extraordinary sources of spiritual energy; indeed, an event which might bring the millennium itself.

Coxey was a 'mild-looking [man] with rounding shoulders . . . and gold-bowed spectacles', who did not impress the journalist Ray Stannard Baker 'as a great leader of a revolutionary movement'. Carl Browne, on the other hand, was larger than life. To Baker, one of the most distinguished reporters of his time, Browne was simply 'too good to be true': 'He reminded me', Baker later wrote, 'of some of the soap-box orators and vendors of Kickapoo Indian remedies I had seen on the Lake front in Chicago.'[12] In fact, Browne had done both. His physical appearance seemed calculated to draw crowds and reporters. He wore a fringed leather coat of the kind identified with Buffalo Bill Cody, with silver dollars for buttons. Although others ascribed his flamboyant clothes to a desire for self-dramatization, Browne himself claimed the wardrobe originated when the San Francisco newspaper that employed him, sent him to the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 as both artist–correspondent, and as part of a fair exhibit called the 'Wild and Wooly West'.[13] In any case, he continued to affect the Cody style long after the fair ended.

Like Cody, Browne too had long hair, a heavy moustache, and a beard. Significantly, his hair and beard did not lead others to note a resemblance to Cody. Instead, they suggested that Browne wanted to look like Jesus Christ. The idea that Christ rather than Cody might be Browne's role-model stemmed principally from a picture Browne had painted of Christ, which subsequently appeared on the 'Army's' banner. Observers were divided about the reason for the resemblance. Some suggested, perhaps uncharitably, that Browne painted Christ to resemble himself, while others suggested that the picture had come first, and that Browne decided to trim his hair and beard as a way of expressing self-identification with Christ.[14]

The plausibility of both views was the result of the belief system for which Browne claimed to speak. What he called his 'theosophy'[15] was only distantly related to the organized Theosophical Society, then at its height in Britain and America. Although he claimed to have been a 'Theosophist (of my thinking)' for many years prior to his first meeting with Coxey,[16] their initial contacts apparently did not expose any of Browne's religious commitments. Rather, the two initially came together as a result of common Populist views.

They first met in Chicago in the late summer of 1893 at the meeting of the American Bimetallic League. Browne, in addition to whatever journalistic activities he was conducting, was also offering a kind of Populist medicine-show on the lakefront, utilizing the patent-medicine staple of a wagon turned into a make-shift stage. The wagon was covered with Browne's cartoons about the evils of the 'money power'. His discussions of financial policy with Coxey extended from Chicago to a subsequent visit Browne made to Massillon, Ohio, in the fall. In later years, the two men remembered the origins of the March quite differently. In Coxey's version, the two were driving in the country near Massillon in November 1893. While Browne was reminiscing about his participation in a march of the unemployed in San Francisco, Coxey said, 'Browne, we will get up a March to Washington'.[17] Browne's version differs in every particular: time, place, occasion, and speaker. While visiting a soup kitchen in the Chicago City Hall 18 December 1893, with a group of reporters, 'the idea came to me to organize these idle men into a "petition with boots on," and march to Washington as an object lesson to Congress and country as well,' an idea he fired off at once to Coxey. Despite Coxey's claim, journalists at the time were unanimous in ascribing the original idea to Browne, and it was completely consistent with his theatrical approach to politics.[18]

There is no indication that Browne had discussed religious issues with Coxey during their conversations and correspondence during the latter months of 1893. Coxey agreed to support the March during January 1894, lending it his financial resources and associating it with his lobbying organization, the Good Roads Association. A formal announcement of the proposed march appeared in the Association's *Bulletin* on 31 January 1894.[19] The next issue of the *Bulletin* reprinted an article from the Massillon *Independent* of 20 February, presenting Browne's religious views and by implication associating Coxey with them. Coxey spoke little about Browne's peculiar ideas, but made no effort to disassociate himself from them until much later.

Donald McMurry, in one of the earliest scholarly treatments of the March, written decades after the event, says bluntly, 'Browne converted Coxey'.[20] Observers at the time were less sure. Shirley Plumer Austin, a writer hostile to the entire enterprise, who called the March's footsoldiers 'the worst specimens of the worst types of the American tramp', nonetheless portrayed Coxey as unreflective and acquiescent:

> Coxey's religious views did not prevent his ready conversion to Browne's abortive theosophy. He does not claim any supernatural wisdom as Browne does, but modestly poses as the living representative of Christ because Browne says so.[21]

According to Henry Vincent, the Populist editor whom Browne commissioned to write the 'Army's' official history, Browne gradually indoctrinated a Coxey 'who leaned toward theosophy, without comprehension of its theory. Since that time the latter has fully unbound the doctrines of Browne, and professes to believe with him . . .'[22] Ray Stannard Baker certainly had no doubts about the sincerity of Coxey's belief. Browne and Coxey, he wrote, 'seemed to me to be living in an unreal world of their own feverish enthusiasm'.[23] When the Massillon *Independent* asked Coxey about the banner of Christ Browne had painted, Coxey was unperturbed about the association: 'He [Christ] was simply a great reformer. He went about like Browne, here, doing all the good he could, and as he preached against those who live upon interest and profit, they controlled the masses as they do now, and so they encompassed His death on the cross.'[24] If Browne had simply recast Jesus as an advocate of the oppressed, it would have been unexceptional, but in fact he did much more.

Browne, whose manner was that of the carnival pitchman rather than the theologian, was never much concerned to set his ideas down in a formal and systematic manner. Except for the memoir of the March he wrote in 1912, two years before his death, his writings were rarely longer than brief newspaper articles. Nonetheless, from these a reasonably clear account of his beliefs can be reconstructed. Browne's cosmos included three main elements: his 'theosophy', which was in fact his version of a doctrine of reincarnation; a closely related concept of the Second Coming; and a conception of the Apocalypse.

Browne believed that the soul, upon a person's death, passed into a universal reservoir of 'soul matter', where it became intermixed with the souls of all those who had already died. This may have been related to his analogous belief about the physical body, whose 'chemical elements . . . go back into their various reservoirs of nature at the death of a person . . .'[25] This idea of recycled elements took an even more bizarre form when, after the March, Browne advertised his miraculous medical discovery, 'Carl's California Cure', which promised to 'prolong life indefinitely'. It was well known, Browne said, 'that the animal system of Man is renewed entire . . . every seven years', so that 'no man is ever more than seven years old physically, if he can but keep his system free from *microbes, insects, that cause all diseases known to man & beast!*'[26] Just as the elements of the body return to nature for recycling, so the soul itself was recycled by movement from the individual to the universal reservoir and then to the newly born.

The implication Browne drew from this recycling was that each individual might possess some fractional part of the souls of those who had previously died. In his own and Coxey's case, he decided that the accident of soul redistribution had given to each of them part of the soul of Christ.[27] That accounted both for their affinity and for the power they might wield together:

> Do you not see anything singular in the coming together of Brother Coxey and myself? [Browne asked a reporter] I believe that a part of the soul of Christ happened to come into my being by re-incarnation. I believe also that another part of Christ's soul is in Brother Coxey, by the same process, and that is what has

> brought us together, closer than brothers. That prevents all jealousies between us; that strikes down all rivalry.[28]

In a bizarre metaphor, Browne sometimes referred to Coxey as the 'cerebrum of Christ' and himself as the 'cerebellum of Christ'.[29]

This concept of migrating and fractionalized souls led Browne to an equally novel idea of the Second Coming. The Second Coming would be brought about by a kind of critical mass of 'soul-matter,' for although he and Coxey presumably were endowed with particularly significant segments of Christ's soul, others had portions as well, and if these components could be brought together, the Second Coming would result. '(T)he remainder of the soul of Christ has been fully re-incarnated in thousands of people throughout the United States today, and that accounts for the tremendous response to the call of ours, to try to bring about peace and plenty, to take the place of panic and poverty'.[30] It was not always clear in Browne's thinking what was cause and what was effect. Would the March succeed because the Christ-segment of thousands of souls would be drawn together in a common enterprise, or was the drawing together the essential precondition for something grander, the Second Coming itself? The notion of soul attraction may explain Coxey's and Browne's penchant for extravagantly over-estimating the size of their following in the days just before the March. Twenty thousand, Coxey thought. 'There'll be nearer one hundred thousand', Browne responded.[31] When only a scant hundred appeared, however, Browne was unfazed. It was, after all, his and Coxey's soul contribution that mattered most; others would come.

What kind of Second Coming the March was meant to produce was cloaked in Browne's typical ambiguity. He devised the movement's official name—'Commonweal of Christ'.[32] He also painted the famous banner carried at the head of the procession, dominated by Browne's painting of Christ. The banner bore the following legend:

> PEACE ON EARTH
> GOOD WILL TO MEN!
> HE HATH RISEN!!!
> BUT
> DEATH
> TO *INTEREST* ON BONDS!!
> HIS SECOND COMING
> THE BANNER OF
> The J. S. Coxey Good Roads
> Association's on to Washington[33]

However, the Second Coming Browne had in mind was not the Second Advent of such traditional premillennialists as William Miller, who expected Christ to physically descend and inaugurate the millennial kingdom.

Instead, Browne had in mind a collective Second Coming, in which the multitude of marchers was to be both the symbol and the soul of Christ. As Browne put it in early 1894, '. . . I believe in the prophecy that He is to come, not in any single form, but in the whole people.'[34] In a public statement, unsigned but surely by Browne since it refers to Coxey as 'Brother Coxey', the March's Marshall elaborated upon the link between reincarnated souls and the Second Advent:

> . . . his coming is not in the flesh of any one being, but reincarnated in the souls of all those who wish to establish a co-operative government through such legislation as this [march] proposes, to take the place of the cut-throat competitive system that keeps alive the crucifixion . . .[35]

Problems of confusion between cause and effect are present here, too, for one is left not knowing whether possessors of part of Christ's soul instinctively abhor the 'money power' or whether those opposed to 'the cut-throat competitive system' must naturally be presumed to harbour part of Christ's soul. Yet another version appears in Browne's 1912 recollections, this time emphasizing the predominance of Christ's soul in himself and Coxey, and at the same time demoting a physical Second Coming to the realm of fancies:

> . . . no matter if the Christ DOES ever come, as many mortals believe He will some time, that ere He does there must prevail HIS spirit—of the 'Sermon on the Mount', and I give it out that there was incarnated in Mr. Coxey and myself so much of that spirit that if the people would cooperate with us, Christ's 'SECOND COMING' was at hand—at least the John the Baptist of it.[36]

The confusion derives in part from Browne's penchant for expressing subtle distinctions in fuzzy language. Beyond the problems of idiom, however, both his reincarnationist views and his ideas about the Second Coming were tied to a millennialism that was equally dependent upon both the traditional imagery of the Book of Revelation and upon the financial conspiracies of Populism.

His ambiguous fusion of economic radicalism and millennial expectation parallels that of the seventeenth-century Puritan sectarian, Gerard Winstanley, who at the end of the 1640s spoke for the agrarian radicalism of the Digger movement. The Diggers, who sought 'to occupy the common lands and form collective farms',[37] frontally attacked the inequities of a society that measured wealth in land. Around the example of their spontaneous seizures and their cultivation of untended waste areas, Winstanley constructed an eloquent and elegant theology—at once more sophisticated and artful than Browne's, but curiously similar in some respects. Winstanley's immanent God placed Christ inside each individual: 'This is the excellency of the work, when a man shall be made to see Christ in other creatures as well as in himself'.[38] He drew from this a Second Coming which, like Browne's, was in the form of an awakened consciousness rather than a supernatural event, when realization of a Christ within would take the place of a physical Second Coming.[39]

Like most millenarians, Browne was vague about the character of the world to come, clearer about what it would not be than about its positive characteristics. Like many chiliasts, before and since, he was drawn to the Book of Revelation, both for its vivid scenario of the last days and for the extraordinary plasticity of its imagery, limited only by the ingenuity of the interpreter.

Browne's sermon on Revelation was apparently a set-piece which he delivered numerous times. He gave sermons regularly on the March, where Sunday services open to the community provided not only a platform for Browne but a device for convincing the locals that the March was more than a gathering of tramps.[40] A full text of 'Revelations Rightly Revealed' survives, and although it comes from 1896 when Browne delivered it during the People's Party presidential campaign, comparison of it with descriptions of the 1894 sermons indicates that it is fundamentally the same, save for some concluding reflections on the coming election.

The special twist Browne gave to the text lay in the symbolic association of the beast with seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns (Revelation 13:1). The beast itself was the idea of a national bank. The seven heads were the pieces of financial legislation long hated by advocates of cheap money, and involved the contraction in the supply of 'greenbacks', the demonetization of silver, and the resumption of the gold standard.[41] For the listing of acts of Congress, Browne freely confessed his reliance on Mrs S. E. V. Emery's Populist tract, *Seven Financial Conspiracies Which Have Enslaved the American People.* Mrs Emery's book, which first appeared in 1887, claimed to expose a conspiracy of English and American financiers who enriched themselves while they 'squeezed the industry of the country like a hoop of steel'.[42] The ten horns 'represent the ten great trusts': railroads, land, sugar, oil, coal, meatpacking, provisions, iron and steel, department stores, and utilities; the crowns were the plutocratic Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, and their ilk who controlled the trusts and lived, Browne said, in the splendour of potentates.

All this St. John of Patmos had presumably seen in his vision, but 'so veiled in allegory that he could escape the martyrdom, if possible, of the usurers of his time. . . .' The world St. John foresaw when the climactic battles of the latter days ended was 'a new heaven and a new earth', 'when it was possible for the people of the earth to become so intelligent as to overthrow kings and usury. . . .' In this version of the sermon, Browne ended by explicitly linking the attainment of the 'new heaven and new earth' not only with a victory for William Jennings Bryan in the election then approaching but with the eventual triumph of Coxey's monetary theories. He was not, he said, certain that McKinley would be defeated. But even if McKinley won,

> . . . the final victory will certainly come soon, anyway . . . for Revelations plainly show that the old Satan—usury—will be chained, and if it ever is, it will be through the plan of the Coxey non-interest bearing bond bills, for which the Commonweal made the march to Washington. It may come through Bryan; it may come through the next congress, without his election; it may come through another, greater, grander, more glorious march to Washington . . . but come it will, for the everlasting God, through St. John, hath ordained it.[43]

This peroration faithfully carries through the linkage of apocalyptic vision with financial reform that Browne had first declared in a statement issued before the March of 1894 in his twin capacities as Secretary of Coxey's Good Roads Association and Marshall of the 'Commonweal of Christ':

> We firmly believe now, in view of the surrounding circumstances, that the time for the fulfillment of prophecy is near at hand, and that all those who go in this procession to Washington will be the humble instruments through which the second Babylon—the MONEY POWER OF USURY—is to fall . . .[44]

Even the failure of the 'Army' to place its proposals before Congress at the Capitol was only a passing episode in a struggle whose outcome was predestined. The dispirited remnants retreated to a Maryland campsite, from which Browne issued a newspaper on 4 July 1894, headed: 'TRANSITION PERIOD *NEW DISPENSATION*'. 'The battle of Armageddon is now on', it proclaimed.[45] It was scarcely any wonder that the English journalist and reformer W. T. Stead characterized Browne as a Fifth Monarchist speaking 'with a modern accent'.[46] Insofar as Browne had anything specific to say about the coming new order, it was to be a society free of 'usury', with 'government furnishing money direct to the people . . .'[47] This 'kingdom of heaven' was for the most part describable only in negative attributes: the absence of poverty, oppression, degrading labour, and so on. Its social structure and political system could presumably be left to the believer's imagination.

A millennium defined in terms of opposition—the elimination of that which is evil—assumes the existence of some malevolent force whose defeat is required before the great day can arrive, and indeed much of Browne's rhetoric was couched in terms of a call to battle. He wrote the lyrics for a 'Commonweal Rallying Song' filled with the imagery of struggle:

See our stars and stripes are streaming
See our banner glow;
In Christ's Second Coming Triumph
O'er our usury foe.[48]

Who, in fact, was the 'usury foe'? It was not simply all who charged interest for the use of money. More concretely, it was a cabal of international bankers who had conspired to deprive the American labouring man of his just rewards. More concretely still, it was the Rothschilds, who stood at once as symbols of the conspiracy and as its leading members.

Browne and, it appears, Coxey himself explicitly identified bankers and the Rothschilds as Jews, not simply as individuals who were among other things Jewish. The judgment of one modern scholar that the 'army' was free of explicit anti-Semitism[49] is unfortunately not supported by the evidence. Thus, the first verse of Browne's 'Rallying Song' concludes:

> 'Tis the glorious non-interest legions,
> Foes of Shenee [sic] gold.[50]

'Sheenee' or 'sheeny', a word of uncertain origin, was an invariably derogatory term for a Jew and first appeared in English in about 1880, often carrying the implication of greed and untrustworthiness.[51] Although in subsequent versions of the song 'Shenee' is omitted,[52] anti-Semitic motifs remained in other forms, particularly pictorial.

Browne always thought of himself as an artist, apparently had some training, and had worked as a panorama painter before his political activities began.[53] His cartoons, however, betray a crudity even judged against the work of the time. One cartoon from 1895 shows a group of seven bankers, with 'Rothschilds' at the head. All are in the standard form of the anti-Semitic caricature—bald, with bulbous hooked noses, and bushy black beards. Dollar signs serve as eyes. Each has his mouth open and is in the process of swallowing head first, an American working man.[64] Beginning in 1895, Coxey began to publish a newspaper, *Sound Money*, which chronicled his and Browne's activities. A favourite illustration in it, a cartoon by Watson Heston entitled 'Crucified Between Two Thieves', shows a crucified Uncle Sam whose pockets are being emptied by two plutocrats labelled 'Republicanism' and 'Democracy', while two Jewish caricature figures prick the dying American with a 'Gold Standard' spear while offering a debt-soaked sponge marked 'Interest on Bonds'. Surmounting the cross is a sign: 'This is U.S. in the Hands of the Jews'. The cartoon was reprinted many times.[55]

Browne consequently constructed a full-blown millenarian system, where the forces of good confronted the forces of evil on a battlefield of world finance. Notwithstanding occasional defeats, the result would be—would have to be—the Second Coming and an ensuing millennium.

4. MILLENARIAN SOURCES

From what sources did Browne's system spring? Some elements can readily be identified as part of the common discourse of late nineteenth-century American radicalism, the fixation upon financial conspiracies, for example, and the demonization of the Jew. '(It) was chiefly Populist writers', observes Richard Hofstadter, 'who expressed that identification of the Jew with the usurer and the "international gold ring" which was the central theme of the American anti-Semitism of the age.'[56] While controversy continues on the question of how intrinsic to Populism such anti-Semitism was,[57] it was clearly the source from which Browne and Coxey himself derived their verbal and pictorial stereotypes of the Jew.

Other components of the system are less typical, hence more difficult to trace, and none more so than Browne's concept of reincarnation and the link between it and the Second Coming. Browne called himself a 'theosophist'. On the one hand, that designation seems to have been accepted without quarrel by W. T. Stead, who should have known a theosophist when he met one. It was, after all, Stead who had inadvertently launched the career of the most famous theosophist of the time, Annie Besant, by securing an introduction for her to the movement's founder, Mme. Blavatsky.[58] On the other hand, Browne's 'theosophy' bore little resemblance to Annie Besant's or to that of any other recognized spokesperson of the movement. Theosophy sought to systematically link religion with doctrines of a spirit world, and reincarnation was a significant element in the synthesis. Its function, however, was to give the soul the opportunity to perfect itself through successive lives. The greater the evil committed in past lives, the longer the sequence of rebirths before a soul achieved union with the divine essence. Those who escaped reincarnation, ranging from saviours such as Jesus or Buddha to less exalted sages, might voluntarily return to earth or prolong their lives to help those less fortunate cast off the consequences of past misdeeds.[59] Absent from theosophical thinking was Browne's notion of the fractionalization of souls, which had allowed him and Coxey, together presumably with many others, to partake of segments of the soul of Christ.

In addition to these doctrinal differences, there are circumstantial grounds for doubting that Browne had anything to do with organized Theosophy. In the first place, the movement was staunchly middle class, with a large number of professionals.[60] Browne, born in a log smokehouse near Springfield, Illinois, was an itinerant popular artist and political journalist,[61] and while neither background nor occupation disqualified him from participation in Theosophical circles, his daily contacts were unlikely to bring him in touch with them. Second, Browne eagerly shared his views on theosophy with anyone willing to listen, but oddly said nothing about the organized Theosophical movement itself—despite the fact that in 1894 Theosophy was in the throes of a struggle for leadership that threatened to split the organization.[62]

Where then did his idiosyncratic views come from? It will not do simply to attribute them, as Stead did, to an innate American predisposition to mysticism.[63] Instead, a far more likely explanation lies in the swirl of ideas in the Chicago of 1893. Motivated by a desire to see the Columbian Exposition, participate in the bimetallism convention, and in general peddle his political wares, Browne came to Chicago in the spring and apparently remained, with perhaps some brief interruptions, until the late fall.[64] The Exposition and the bimetallism meeting were not, however, the only notable events in Chicago that year, for the city also hosted the World Parliament of Religions. The Parliament not only provided an unprecedented opportunity for the presentation of historic Asian religions to Western audiences, but also became a major occasion for the presentation of Theosophy. In September, Annie Besant took the Parliament by storm, speaking to 3000 on one evening, and 3500 the following day. Her appearances made front-page news in the next day's *Tribune*.[65] Given the sensation Mrs Besant created and the extraordinary press coverage of her lectures, it is inconceivable that Browne, the self-appointed religious thinker, was unaware of her presence. Although there is no reason to believe he heard Mrs Besant speak, it is entirely likely that he had obtained some notion of Theosophy second-hand, either through word-of-mouth or through newspaper articles, which would account for both his sudden interest in reincarnation and for the differences between his and orthodox theosophical doctrine.

Coxey's own relationship to Browne's metaphysical speculation seems problematic. During the planning phase and the March itself, he had only supportive things to say about his colleague, although in fact Coxey tended to avoid being drawn into discussions of religion. He preferred to remain on the level of legislative proposals. He may well have felt flattered to think that the economic views he held somehow meshed with transcendent cosmic forces, proof both of their validity and of their ultimate triumph. In a sense the two were also in a relationship that could be viewed, depending on how charitably one regards it, as either symbiotic or mutually exploitative. Coxey's money and connections suddenly gave Browne the opportunity to lead a movement of national visibility instead of lecturing to the curious and scoffing on the Chicago lakefront. Coxey, unable to secure a respectful hearing for his measures in Washington, saw in Browne someone whose gifts for organization and promotion would allow him to appeal to Congress in the name of the American people and make his proposals impossible to ignore or sidetrack.

After the March, Coxey and Browne temporarily drew apart. At one level, the breach was occasioned by purely personal factors. Mamie Coxey, Jacob Coxey's stunning blonde daughter, eloped with Browne in 1895, against her father's express wishes. Coxey, a Populist but also a prudent businessman, doubted Browne's ability to support his daughter, a reasonable consideration in light of the fact that Browne was already living off Coxey in his capacity as Marshall of the 'Army' and Secretary of the Good Roads Association. It did not help that the domestic tiff was almost as widely reported as the March itself.[66] By the time of the Populist Convention in July 1896, the relationship was still sufficiently distant for the St. Louis *Chronicle* to describe a meeting between Browne and Coxey as 'very frosty.'[67] But the relationship seemed to have warmed sufficiently by the fall so that the Brownes could return to Ohio where Carl campaigned vigorously for the Populist ticket on Coxey's home territory, and on the day before the Presidential election, Browne drove his 'campaign panorama wagon' in a Coxey-led parade through Massillon.[68]

Beyond the soap opera of Coxey domesticity, Coxey was clearly edging away from Browne's religious vision of Populism. The earliest indication came on August 15, 1894, only three and a half months after the 'Army' arrived in Washington, when Coxey renamed the 'Commonweal'—or what was left of it. As a Coxey publication delicately put the matter, 'The word Christ was dropped out of deference to the misunderstanding existing in the minds of many good people in regard to its use and the words United States of America put in place.'[69] This secularization-by-decree was linked to Coxey's belief that Browne's religious views exposed the cause to unnecessary ridicule.[70] Yet the irony of Coxey's retreat into a more secular brand of economic radicalism lay in the fact that the more he distanced himself from Browne, the less attention he received. He lived on like some museum exhibit until 1951, when he died at age 97, until the very end wearing the high celluloid collar of a proper Edwardian gentleman. Yet he never regained the national stature he had achieved in 1894, not even during the Great Depression when his views once again found an audience. For Coxey's economic panaceas had been carried to prominence by precisely the eccentric millennialism of his colleague which in later years he found so painful an embarrassment.

5. *CONCLUSION*

'Coxey's Army' is a good story today for the same reason that journalists found it good copy at the time: it has precisely the right mixture of personal eccentricity, deviant religion, moral outrage, and quixotic heroism. Yet the 'Army', its march, and its leaders were more than merely picturesque, and I wish now to touch briefly upon their larger significance, and in particular on two sets of implications. The first concerns the manner in which 'Coxey's Army' prefigures social movements of the last 25 years, for much concerning the events of 1894 strikingly anticipates those of the late 1960s, '70s, and '80s. Second, the March, particularly in its millennial aspects, must be seen as a response to an evil that was in the 1890s still relatively novel, the evil of largescale economic dislocation. As to the anticipatory aspects of 'Coxey's Army', these lie in three main areas: the relationship with communications media; the search for a dramatic and potent public act; and the elaborately syncretic character of the doctrine.

Although both Browne and Coxey expected to lead a mass movement, numbering at the least tens of thousands, in the end they had to settle for a few hundred. Yet the failure of numbers did not translate into obscurity; far from it. The tiny band of marchers transfixed the nation and its political leadership because of the magnifying effects of press coverage. The combination of mass circulation newspapers and telegraphy allowed the progress of the March to be followed all over the country and for national importance to be accorded as a function not of size per se but of news value as judged by reporters and their editors. When Coxey told Ray Stannard Baker that his Chicago *Record* article had generated 'a large gunnysack half full of mail and telegrams', Baker reflected with sudden awareness that 'I was helping to launch this crazy enterprise!'[71] Browne quickly recognized that what the 'Army' lacked in marchers it could gain in press attention if only he could provide a steady supply of the dramatic and picturesque. Thus the March increasingly approximated what Daniel Boorstin calls a 'pseudo-event', an event held for the express purpose of being reported.[72]

The pseudo-event, by blurring the boundary between the authentic and the counterfeit; has become a cliché in modern life, but it was only beginning to intrude on the country's consciousness in 1894. In the last quarter century, in particular, national visibility has been accorded to many groups and causes whose adherents have sometimes been fewer than Browne's and Coxey's. Consequently, although the 'Army' was not truly a mass movement, it was treated as though it were by authorities along the way as well as by the national administration. Officials of municipalities, the District of Columbia, and the Cleveland administration treated the March as though it were the onslaught of thousands. Conditioned by the amplifying effects of newspaper coverage, they allowed Browne and Coxey to behave as if their movement were vast and politically powerful. In light of Browne's histrionic impulses, he required little prompting to fit his behaviour to the interlocking expectations of public officials and journalists.

The amplifying effect of reportage was closely related to another of the March's prefigurative characteristics: the 'Commonweal of Christ' was an act-centred organization. At one level, of course, its behaviour was avowedly instrumental. The public manifestation of the misery of the unemployed would provide Coxey with the opportunity to present his proposals in a manner which would assure Congressional attention and once such attention was given, their inherent virtues would become so clear as to make adoption inevitable. At the same time, the March was expressive, to the extent that it bonded together into an intense although temporary community a collection of individuals who had no secure place in society. But the March also existed on a plane which was neither clearly instrumental nor demonstrably expressive, a plane of what may be called 'sacramental politics', in which particular actions themselves are believed to unlock cosmic forces, irrespective of one's own beliefs or the responses of others.

Browne, for example, seems never to have been troubled by the fact that the 'Army's' foot-soldiers seemed neither to care about nor understand his theology of Second Advent and reincarnation. Whether they cared or understood was irrelevant to the outcome. As we have seen, Browne's sacramental side included a variety of theories. According to one, the March brought together a critical mass of the 'soul matter' of Christ. According to another, the Second Coming would be a collective phenomenon, in which the gathered people would be, as it were, the body of Christ. There seems little point in trying to extract a consistent position from the meanderings of Browne's mind. But there does appear to be a consistent belief that the very occurrence of the March placed American society in closer touch with a transcendent reality. Just as Browne was not unduly disturbed by the small number of marchers or by their low level of awareness, so he does not seem to have been greatly disheartened by the fiasco at the Capitol steps. Unlike Coxey, he was not result-oriented, in the conventional political sense of the term. Since the March was a magical or sacramental event, its mere occurrence was sufficient, for it brought in closer touch the realms of the sacred and the mundane, whatever the immediate political consequences.

Act-centred politics have recurred in varied ideological contexts since the days of 'Coxey's Army', and while the range of variation is broad enough to make it clear that the 'Army' itself could scarcely have given birth to so many offspring, it did significantly prefigure an increasingly important strain of political activity. During the 1960s, it was conspicuously evident among some members of the 'New Left', for whom acts of violence and protest were often assumed to have an intrinsic significance. It was sufficient merely to engage in acts of confrontation without the necessity of calculating consequences.

Finally, 'Coxey's Army' is set apart, at least from most of the movements of its own time, by a strikingly syncretic system of beliefs, interweaving religious and secular strands. Here, once again, the movement's character owed far more to Browne than to Coxey, for Browne synthesized his beliefs out of at least three principal sources. First, he appears to have had at least some familiarity with Protestant millennialism.

Browne's millennialism drew on both the premillennial and postmillennial strains of American eschatological thought. On the one hand, Browne's commitment to monetary reform—present long before his first meeting with Coxey—suggests postmillennial gradualism and an associated confidence in the potency of human action. Indeed, at one level the March itself could be construed as a dramatic reformist endeavour. The phrase often employed by Coxey and Browne—a 'petition in boots'—sounds the postmillennial, reformist theme. Nonetheless, in important ways, Browne was at least as much a premillennialist, and his commitment to reform managed to coexist with apocalyptic expectation. As he made unmistakably clear, he viewed his own time as ripe for the climactic historic battle between good and evil. Coxey's economic proposals offered the vehicle by which the forces of good could secure total, permanent victory over their adversaries. The elaborate revisioning of Revelation in Populist terms unmistakably linked changes in the economic system with an imminent and definitive break in mundane history.

Browne's ability to shift in a seemingly effortless manner between pre- and postmillennialism might be regarded simply as the inconsistencies of a mind little given to systematic and disciplined thought. Yet while Browne did leap disconcertingly from one idea to the next, his hybrid millennialism had deeper roots. The distinction between pre- and postmillennialism, relatively sharply drawn in the early decades of the nineteenth century, became increasingly blurred by the second half of the 1800s. A number of factors seem responsible for the convergence: First, premillennial readings of Biblical texts were acquiring a new intellectual respectability. Second, confidence in gradual human improvement had become a virtual article of faith among Americans of all religious persuasions. Finally, and ironically, pessimism in intellectual and artistic circles made cataclysmic visions both commonplace and fashionable.[73] Browne was consequently not alone in simultaneously manipulating ideas of activism and fatalism, robust optimism and terrifying calamity.

Browne also had, albeit probably at second-hand, some acquaintance with Asian spirituality. This included, of course, his 'theosophy', with its concept of reincarnation. Americans were just beginning to develop their belief in the superiority of Indian spiritual attainment, an infatuation demonstrated not only by Annie Besant's appearance at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago but by the equally dramatic appearance there of Swami Vivekananda. Finally, Browne, a committed Populist, had an easy familiarity with its doctrines of economic protest and financial conspiracy. The purity and indeed the very survival of American society was threatened by a 'money power' of unimaginable resources and guile. Richard Hofstadter categorizes this vein of Populist thought as an example of the 'paranoid political style', which combines an overheated concern for conspiracies with a belief that the ultimate battle between good and evil is at hand.[74] While elements of the 'paranoid style' surely shine through in Browne, and indeed in Coxey himself, neither betrays the suppressed pessimism so often found in its representatives, the fear that in the coming final battle, evil rather than good will triumph. Both Coxey and especially Browne remained convinced of the imminence of a millennial triumph. America would not only regain its former virtue, but would extend it to create a new society of unprecedented justice and equality.

Browne's tripartite synthesis of Protestant millennialism, Asian spirituality, and Populist conspiracy theory had an extraordinary cohesiveness. The world, he said, was ruled by unseen forces, the malevolent forces of the financial cabal and the redemptive forces of reincarnated souls. The struggle between them played out the ancient script in the Book of Revelation, giving both contemporary meaning and imminence to its ambiguous predictions. By implication, Christians who took eschatological prophecies seriously needed Populism in order to understand their present meaning and 'theosophy' in order to bring them to fruition.

This curious fusion of religious fundamentalism, a modish concern for the occult, and radical politics reappears in the movements of the 1960s, '70s, and '80s. An entire genre of contemporary religious literature now seeks to transform the Book of Revelation into a political tract, as, for example, in the work of Hal Lindsey.[75] Eastern conceptions of religion, filtered through Western sensibilities, appear in so-called 'cult movements', such as Hare Krishna, and in the more diffuse 'New Age' fascination with 'channelling', in which mediums serve as the literal mouthpieces of long-dead 'ascended masters'. The contemporary appetite for conspiracies has found dramatic expression among right-wing groups which combine notions of a Jewish conspiracy with millennialism and radical economics in ways that eerily echo the Populist era.

The current outburst of right-wing activity recapitulates many motifs present in the 1890s, albeit with some novel elements. The present political milieu includes organizations such as the Aryan Nations, committed to the creation of an independent 'Aryan' state, survivalist communities, such as Covenant, Sword, and Arm of the Lord, which withdraw in anticipation of massive social chaos and race warfare, Klan organizations that seek a white-dominated social order, and a variety of groups such as Posse Comitatus, groups hostile to elements of the economic order, including the state taxing power and the Federal Reserve System. This diverse array of groups shares overlapping memberships and common core beliefs.[76]

These common beliefs differentiate contemporary white supremacists from 'mainstream' American conservatives and from right-wing movements of the past. While similarities exist between present groups and such earlier organizations as George Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party in the 1960s, Klan groups of the 1920s and 1950s, and Fascist organizations of the 1930s, the differences are dramatic. The most significant lie at the intersection of political and religious beliefs. White supremacist groups seek to advance a political agenda which includes the subordination of Blacks, the subordination or destruction of Jews, and the dissolution of financial institutions which they believe to be controlled by Jews. These are not novel themes; indeed, we have already seen the emphasis on a Jewish financial conspiracy in the views of Coxey and Browne. However, contemporary white supremacists, unlike their predecessors, have linked this economic and political agenda with the theology of 'British-Israelism'.

'British-Israelism', itself a fusion of religious and secular elements, asserts that the 'Ten Lost Tribes' of the Bible survived intact, migrated northwestward, and eventually populated the British Isles. Although 'British-Israel' ideas may be found as far back as the seventeenth century, such views did not appear fully developed in England until the 1840s. By the 1870s, organized groups began to appear and shortly thereafter had developed into an elaborate network of associations and publications.[77] The prolific 'British-Israel' literature sought to demonstrate the Israelite origins of Anglo-Saxon peoples by an accumulation of archaeological, linguistic, and historical evidence, much of it of dubious reliability, dubiously interpreted. The revisioning of history accomplished through it, however, appeared to afford empirical evidence that a large number of otherwise unfulfilled Biblical prophecies had in fact been fulfilled, thus substantially shortening the time remaining before the millenarian consummation.

From almost the beginning of the movement, a division developed between champions of British-Celtic descent from the Biblical tribes and so-called 'Teutonists', who argued for the Israelite origins of all Germanic peoples. Although those holding the more narrowly British view prevailed within 'British-Israel' organizations, the 'Teutonists' were never wholly displaced. Both groups accepted the Israelite origins of contemporary Jews, but like other Protestants asserted that the Jews' failure to accept Christ had deprived them of a central role in the economy of salvation. To the extent that 'British-Israelism' had a political dimension, it lay in the validation provided for a British imperial mission. For if indeed Britain was the true legatee of Biblical prophecies, then the worldly success of British commerce and empire were part of a divine plan rather than simply the outcome of luck, cleverness, or resolve.

This so-called 'Identity' theology created by 'British-Israel' writers passed in time to the United States, both because of America's English origins and because political changes gave to the United States a place similar to that earlier occupied by Great Britain. The transfer sometimes amounted to a virtual duplication of the original, save that America now occupied the place of Britain, as, for example, in Herbert W. Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God.[78] However, a more complex process brought together 'British-Israel' theology, anti-Semitism, and white supremacist politics. Beginning in the 1920s, 'British-Israel' views began to appear in the United States as a vehicle for anti-Semitism, through writers associated with both the *Dearborn Independent* and with Gerald L. K. Smith.[79] Not surprisingly, it was the 'Teutonist' variant that found acceptance in these circles.

In addition to identifying Germanic peoples with the 'Lost Tribes', 'Identity' writers on the political right added a concept of Jewish demonization wholly absent from original 'British-Israel' thought. Thus Jews are now said in 'Identity' texts to have descended not from Israelites but from a literally diabolical union between Eve and Satan in the Garden, and to have usurped the place of 'true Aryan' Israelites. 'British-Israelites' commonly asserted that 'while all Jews are Israelites, not all Israelites are Jews'; American white supremacists now insist that no Jews are Israelites but that all 'Aryans' are.

This strange amalgam has produced an American right-radicalism in which older concepts of racial and religious subordination are grounded neither in self-interest nor in community custom but in immutable divine command. Although this ideology is closely related to a reading of Biblical texts, essential to it is an elaborately spurious erudition that purports to read Biblical associations into European languages and place names, to reveal their putatively Israelite origins.

Like Browne's homegrown 'theosophy', in which each individual inherited a quantum of Christ's soul, the myth that the 'Ten Lost Tribes' are the ancestor of contemporary Europeans and Americans is a gratifying and unfalsifiable fantasy for believers. Like Browne's belief system, too, it melds together a traditional millenarian scenario with deviant beliefs that lie outside both major denominations and fundamentalist sects. The deviant beliefs serve the catalytic function of demonstrating to believers that the final, millenarian times are near, that the movement's political aims are God's aims, too, and that in a world polarized between good and evil, a Jewish conspiracy is the ultimate adversary.

The similarities are all the more striking in light of the stark policy differences between Browne and Coxey on the one hand and contemporary white supremacists on the other. While the former sought an egalitarian society based on a redistribution of wealth, the latter desire a hierarchical society of racial domination. The contrast suggests that such comparisons are less for purposes of pointing out policy differences (these are clear enough in any case) than they are for demonstrating the more interesting similarities in what may be called 'millenarian style'. For that purpose one may discern stylistic commonalities in belief systems as apparently dissimilar as Browne's 'theosophy' and white supremacist racial theory; or, for that matter, the more diffuse but equally millennial world-view of contemporary 'New Age' religiosity.

In short, while the mental universe of Carl Browne may have been eccentric, it was not isolated, either from intellectual currents of its own time or from future directions of religious and political thought. Indeed, although Coxey was sufficiently embarrassed to try to purge the movement of Browne's eccentric notions, in the end it was the long-lived Coxey who seemed like the historical relic, increasingly out of touch with a changing world, while Browne would scarcely have been out of place in the Berkeley, Madison, or Cambridge of the last quarter century; even the buckskin garment would have been a nice countercultural touch.

Part of the continuity may be ascribed to the nature of the moral world Browne saw himself confronting. He was responding both to the pervasive inequalities of Gilded Age America and to the accentuated form they took under the pressure of the 1893–1894 depression. Economic depression lay outside the traditional apparatus of signs and portents that had governed millenarian thought in the West since at least the seventeenth century. Millennialism looked for signals, on the one hand, in instabilities in nature, in the form of either natural disasters or anomalies, and, on the other, in instabilities in politics, signalled by warfare and sudden changes in rulership. Depressions counted as neither the one nor the other.

The Millerites had failed in part because they remained embedded in the old millenarian calculus, in which manmade disasters had little place and depressions none at all. Browne, on the other hand, although he retained the traditional symbolism of the Book of Revelation, explicitly expanded it in order to enfold the novel catastrophes of an urban–industrial society. The fusion of millenarian religion with political radicalism extended to the March to the Capitol itself, a journey which was both a pilgrimage to a shrine and an act of confrontation with the authority the shrine symbolized. In keeping with Browne's battle-cry 'He is risen!' the March began on Easter Sunday, but it was carefully timed to arrive on May Day.

Browne's religio-political synthesis therefore addressed weaknesses of both economic radicalism and millenarian religion. The former, preoccupied with conspiratorial machinations, sometimes lapsed into the negativism of the 'paranoid political style'. In its Manichean vision, the forces of evil were always on the verge of victory, while the virtuous managed to survive only by dint of extraordinary heroism or temporary reprieves. In this precariously balanced moral universe, the triumph of the good could never be taken for granted. Thus Mrs Emery had dedicated *Seven Financial Conspiracies* to 'the enslaved people of a dying republic'.[80] If economic radicalism could perish in its own dark visions, millenarian religion, as we have seen, approached the world with a frame of reference more suited to the problems of the traditional agrarian past than to the industrialized present. Unable to speak directly to the ills of modern societies, its vision of a perfected world seemed increasingly irrelevant. Where earthquakes, storms, and dynastic changes were no longer the great symbolic fears, the scenario of millenarian fulfilment appeared increasingly irrelevant.

Browne, cobbling together bits and pieces of economic conspiratorialism and millenarian religion, linked by Eastern-occult conceptions of the soul, lifted the conspiracies beyond the paranoid style to become part of a larger world-redemptive process. At the same time, the millenarian vision was severed from the old and outdated categories of portents and explicitly linked to the most fearful plague of modernity, economic collapse. He and 'Coxey's Army', therefore, pointed simultaneously back to the symbols of earlier ages and forward to the hybrid millenarian visions of our own times.

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33 Untitled album of March photographs, Massillon (OH) Public Library, emphasis in original. The final four lines do not appear in Browne's line drawing of the banner which appears in *Bulletin No. 3*.

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40 Reports of Browne's sermonizing appear in, among others: Stead, '"Coxeyism"'. Vincent, *The Story of the Commonweal*, p. 69. McMurry, *Coxey's Army*, pp. 66–70. A photograph in the Massillon Public Library shows Browne speaking in Hagerstown, MD, with the Commonweal banner next to him.

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BOOK REVIEW

Judith Thompson and Paul Heelas, *The Way of the Heart. The Rajneesh Movement*. Wellinborough, The Aquarian Press, 1986, 142 pp. Price: £5.99.

Thompson and Heelas have brought off a remarkable feat: they have managed to combine lucidity with sensitivity. Their brief study of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, his teachings, his communes and his followers is lucid in its account of bewildering paradoxes and fast-moving changes, yet the reader is also given a rich insight into the personal experiences of practising Rajneeshees (*sannyasins*) and ex-members. Indeed, the book is unusual for the space allotted to participant testimonies, and this is a welcome departure from previous studies which have tended towards either hagiography or sensationalist exposure of the 'sex cult' image.

The Rajneesh movement, which had its origins in the Guru's first communes in Bombay and Poona, has passed through many phases since it moved to the U.S.A. in 1981 and is continuing to experience sudden and rapid changes of ideological and organizational development even now. The authors are to be congratulated for keeping track of the very latest twists and turns in the movement's fortunes which have included the virtual abandonment of its massive ranch in Oregon, the imprisonment of Rajneesh's former right-hand woman, the Guru's pathetic search for a new host country and the 'rationalization' of local communes in many parts of the world. To make matters even more complicated, Rajneesh has adopted a succession of different stances towards the movement ranging from that of dominant teacher to silent presence to apparently reluctant leader of 'autonomous' groups.

The account of Bhagwan's teachings emphasizes the centrality of such notions as authenticity, growth, transformation, love and surrender. There is strong opposition to the mind or ego, and attachment to change is disparaged. However, the movement has launched many successful businesses and is not other-worldly on principle; in fact, the communes revolve around work in a practical sense. Work for the movement is translated as 'worship'. The authors tend to be evasive, however, about the organizational, and especially financial, links between the central agencies of the movement and the relatively autonomous businesses, communes and therapy centres in which sannyasins perform their daily work-worship.

Recruitment to the movement is through various channels, but it seems that a prior interest in psychotherapy and personal growth has disposed many people to be sympathetic to Rajneesh's ideas and techniques for realizing the Buddha-nature that is allegedly present in everybody. The theme of personal growth looms large in testimonies of recruits but it seems to be curiously inseparable from a feeling of close attachment to the person of Rajneesh. A more extended discussion of the relation between growth and dependency would have been welcome. However, at least there is an interesting discussion of the tension within the Guru's worldview between the search for total freedom and the necessity to operate within social forms, and the concluding chapter's mock-trial format ingeniously airs most of the criticisms that have been levelled against Rajneesh and his movement. The arguments for the 'prosecution' and 'defence' are judged to be inconclusive, and an indefinite adjournment of the case is finally pronounced.

Only time will tell how the Rajneesh movement will develop, but the signs are that its path will be far from straight. Thompson and Heelas have nevertheless done an excellent job in interpreting the pattern of past events and present tendencies. In addition, although their book makes no comparative observations and is innocent of social scientific theorizing, it provides a sensitive and thoughtful guide to one of today's most controversial new religious movements. The informed lay person and students of religious studies alike will find it interesting and eminently readable.

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